TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA
TURTLES
THE IDW COLLECTION V16

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IDW
@IDWpublishing
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COVER ARTIST:
Sophie Campbell

STORY CONSULTANTS:
Kevin Eastman & Tom Waltz

SERIES EDITORS:
Bobby Curnow, Tom Waltz, and Charles Beacham

SERIES ASSISTANT EDITORS:
Vanessa Real and Nicolas Niño

COLLECTION EDITOR:
Alonzo Simon

COLLECTION GROUP EDITOR:
Kris Simon

COLLECTION DESIGNER:
Amauri Osorio

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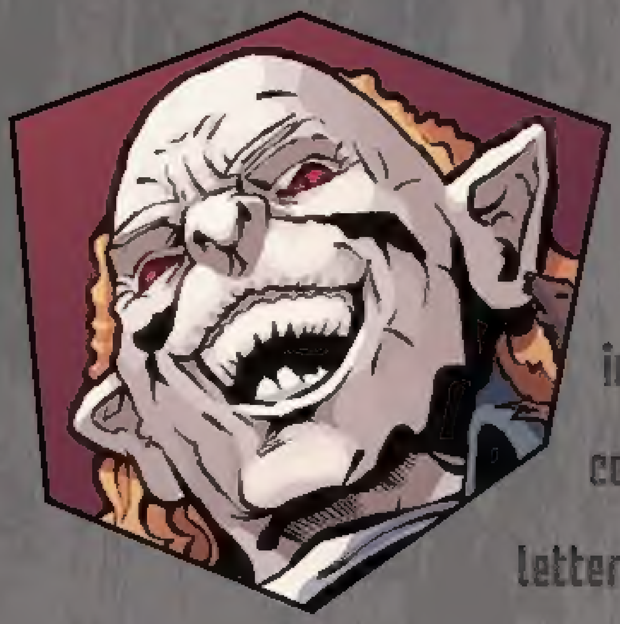

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inks by MARIA KEANE
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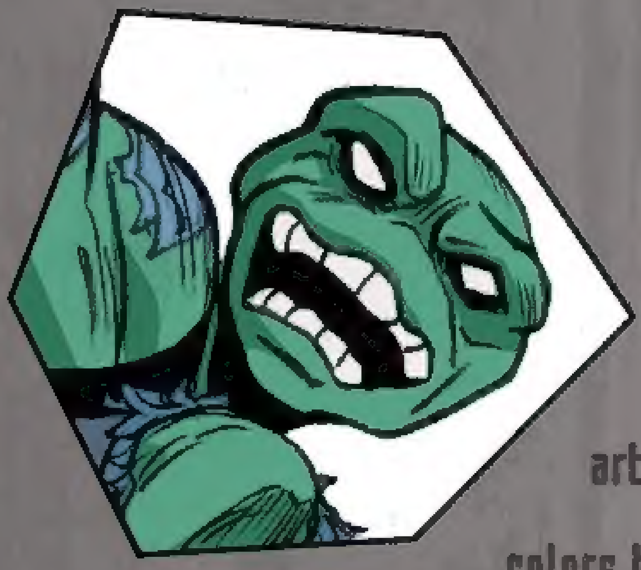

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2021 ANNUAL

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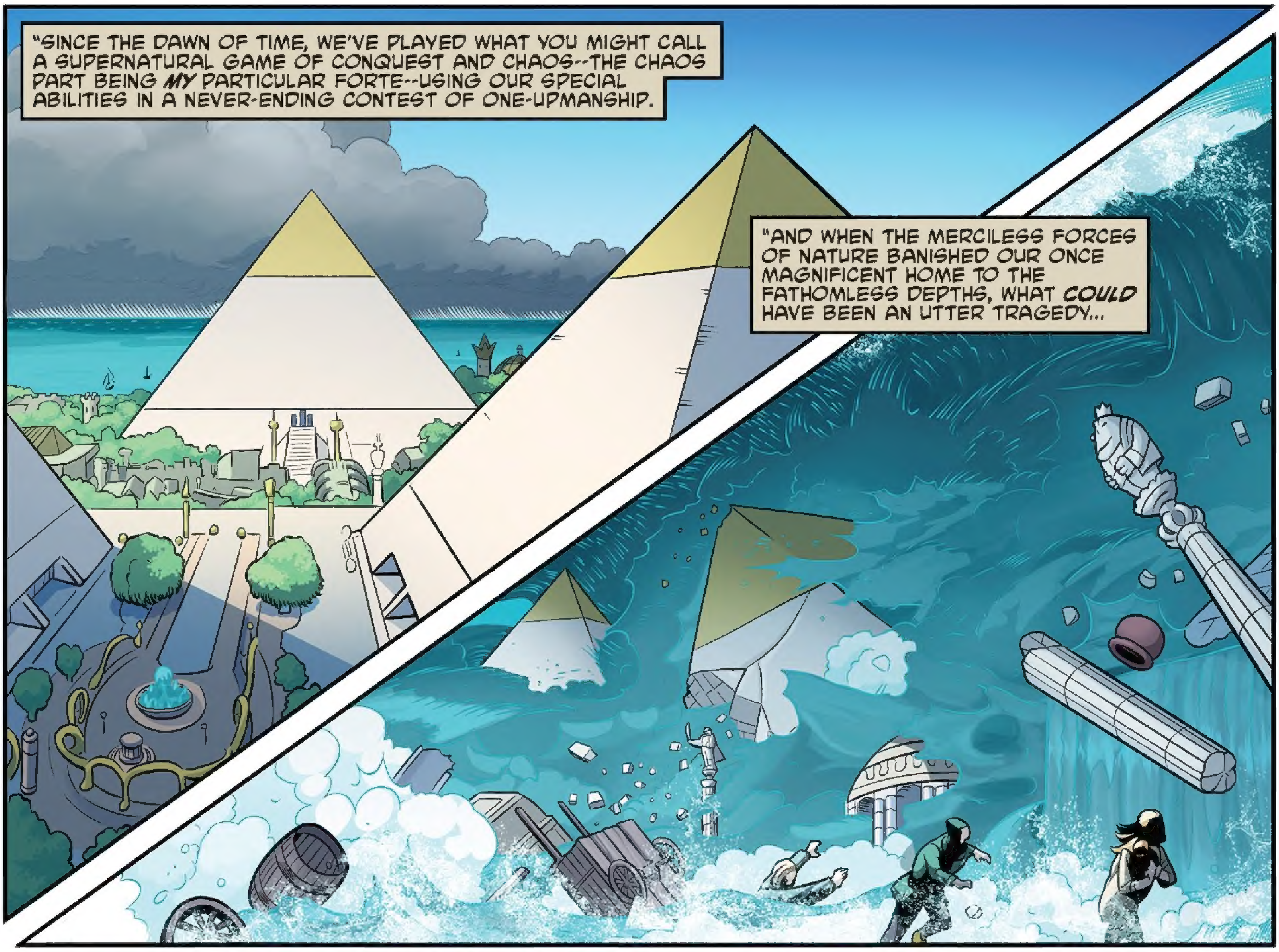
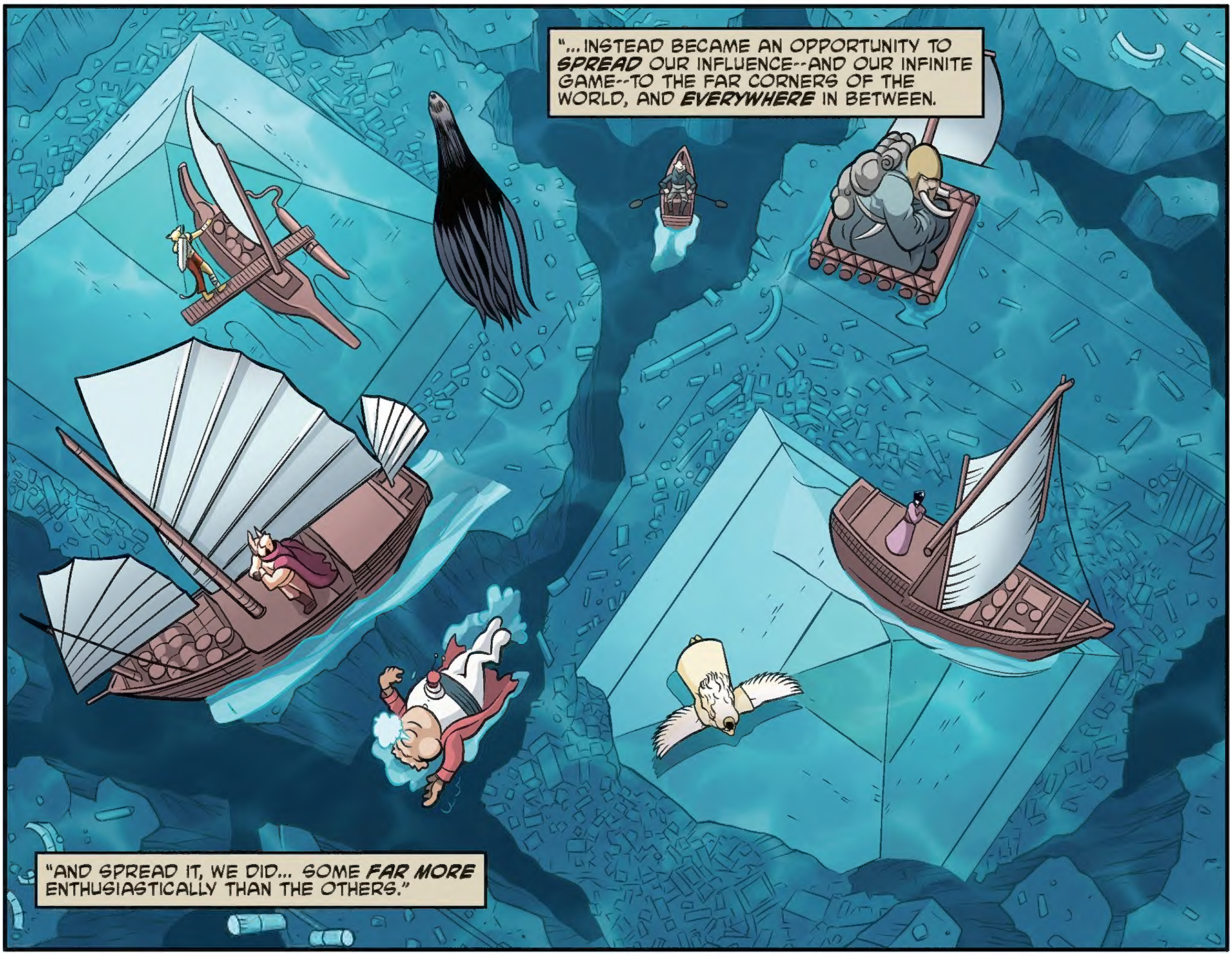
FRANKLY, I'M AS SURPRISED AS YOU THAT THIS MEETING HASN'T HAPPENED SOONER.
AND AS ONE WHO THRIVES ON BEING A PURVEYOR OF SURPRISE, IT'S CERTAINLY A PLEASANT SURPRISE TO BE SURPRISED. WHICH IS CERTAINLY A LOT OF SURPRISES.
BUT, NOT SURPRISINGLY, I DIGRESS.
AHEM
THE PURPOSE OF THIS AFOREMENTIONED MEETING IS A RECRUITMENT CALL OF SORTS. OR, PERHAPS, AN EXCLUSIVE ENTICEMENT WOULD BE A MORE PALATABLE DESCRIPTION--
--A PERSONAL INVITATION, FROM ME TO YOU, TO MIX BUSINESS WITH PLEASURE BY JOINING IN THE GREATEST COMPETITION THIS WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN.
BUT FIRST, I SUPPOSE INTRODUCTIONS AND A BIT OF HISTORY ARE IN ORDER.
AFTER ALL, I KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU, YET I'VE NO DOUBTS YOU'VE A BURNING CURIOSITY ABOUT ME.
TO BEGIN WITH, YOU MAY CALL ME...
...THE
RAT KING.

I AM ONE OF EIGHT IMMORTAL SIBLINGS...
...EACH OF US POSSESSED OF DIVERSELY UNIQUE POWERS AND PERSONALITIES.
"THE MONOLITHIC MANMOTH.
"THE JINGOISTIC JAGWAR.
"THE TOSSPOT TOAD BARON.
"THE CHAMPION CHI-YOU.
"THE CONSPIRATORIAL KITSUNE.
"THE GUILEFUL GOTHANO.
"THE ANGELIC AKA."
AND YOURS TRULY, OF COURSE...
...THE RASCALLY RAT KING.
ALL ALLITERATION ASIDE, A FANTASTICALLY FORMIDABLE FAMILY.

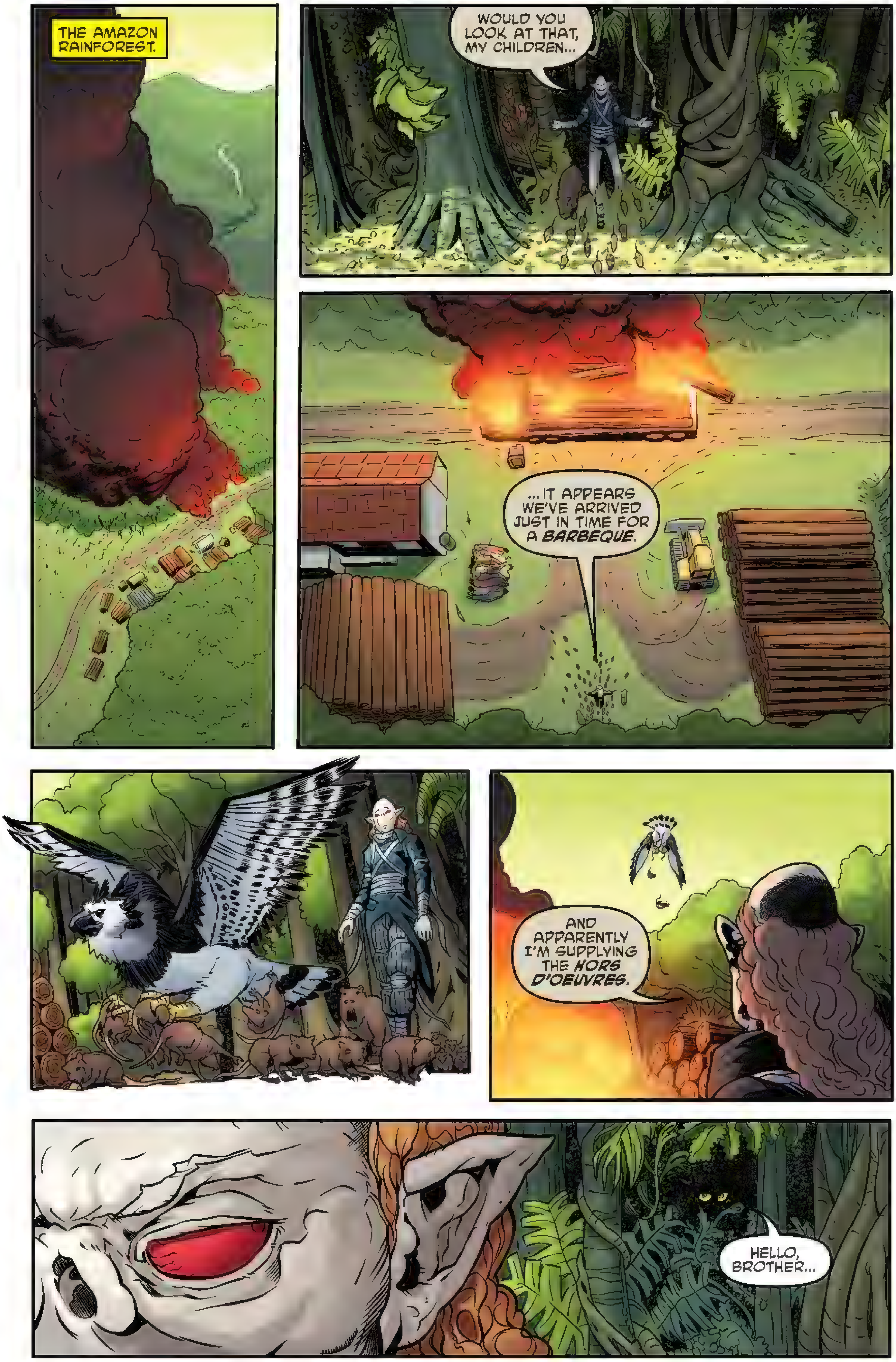

"SINCE THE DAWN OF TIME, WE'VE PLAYED WHAT YOU MIGHT CALL A SUPERNATURAL GAME OF CONQUEST AND CHAOS--THE CHAOS PART BEING *MY* PARTICULAR FORTE--USING OUR SPECIAL ABILITIES IN A NEVER-ENDING CONTEST OF ONE-UPMANSHIP.
"AND WHEN THE MERCILESS FORCES OF NATURE BANISHED OUR ONCE MAGNIFICENT HOME TO THE FATHOMLESS DEPTHS, WHAT *COULD* HAVE BEEN AN UTTER TRAGEDY...


"...INSTEAD BECAME AN OPPORTUNITY TO *SPREAD* OUR INFLUENCE--AND OUR INFINITE GAME--TO THE FAR CORNERS OF THE WORLD, AND *EVERYWHERE* IN BETWEEN.
"AND SPREAD IT, WE DID... SOME *FAR MORE* ENTHUSIASTICALLY THAN THE OTHERS."

"MY SISTER KITSUNE, IN PARTICULAR, HAD BEEN ON A RATHER AGGRESSIVE RUN UP UNTIL RECENTLY.
"SHE'D BEEN PLAYING A LONG GAME, DURING WHICH TIME SHE WAS ABLE TO INDEFINITELY REMOVE BIG BROTHER CHI-YOU FROM THE BOARD (NO SMALL FEAT, THAT)...
"...AS WELL AS GOOD SISTER AKA.
"ALL IN THE HOPES OF RAISING OUR DRAGON FATHER FROM THE NETHERWORLD...
"...WILLING, EVEN, TO SACRIFICE HER VERY OWN GRANDDAUGHTER IN THE PURSUIT OF VICTORY.
"ENTHUSIASTIC, INDEED."
AS I'M SURE YOU'VE ALREADY SURMISED, HOWEVER, SHE FAILED IN THE END--
--THE MANGLED CARCASS OF OUR FATHER'S DRAGON-HOST ROTTING IN YOUR GREAT CITY'S STREETS WOULD HAVE BEEN HARD TO MISS.
BUT WHAT HAS ANY OF THIS TO DO WITH YOU, YOU ASK?
EXCELLENT QUESTION.
SQUEAK!
YOU SEE, THE SOURCE OF MY SISTER'S FAILURE--
--NAY, THE SOURCE OF ALL OF MY SIBLINGS' RECENT FAILURES, AS WELL AS MANY OF YOUR OWN--
--IS AN ANNOYING ASSEMBLY OF ANTAGONISTS SHARED BY US ALL.

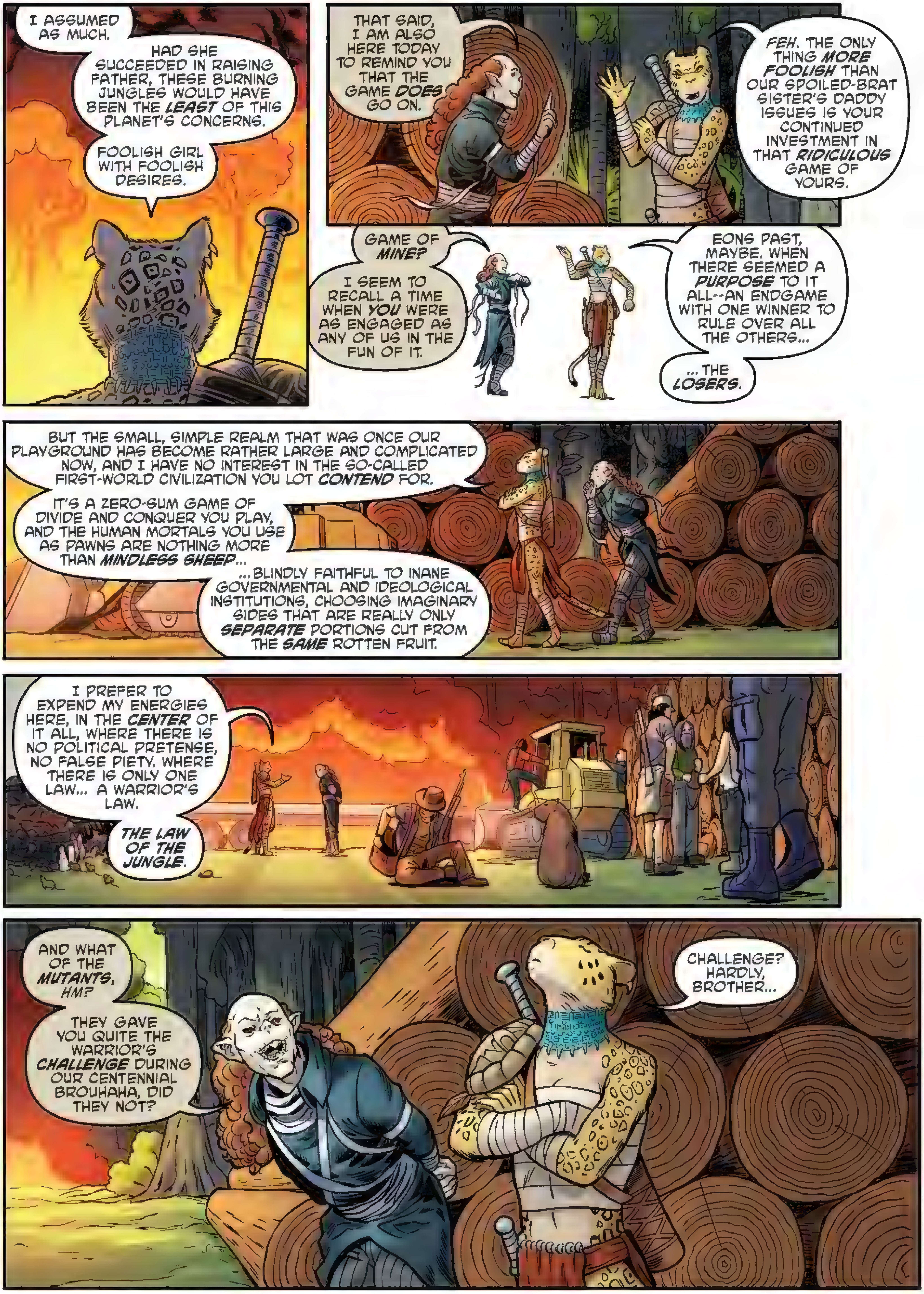
"DO I REALLY HAVE TO SPELL IT OUT FOR YOU?"
FDNY

AND ALTHOUGH SOME OF THESE MONSTROUS SPOILSPORTS HAVE ALSO BEEN REMOVED FROM THE PLAYING BOARD...
...THE REMAINING MUTANTS AND THEIR HUMAN COMPATRIOTS CONTINUE TO BE A FESTERING THORN IN THE SIDE TO ALL WHOM THEY OPPOSE.
EVEN MY MOST CHARMING AND ELOQUENT ATTEMPTS AT ENLISTING CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS AMONGST THEM ONTO MY TEAM, SO TO SPEAK...
"...HAVE BEEN MET WITH OBSTINATE REJECTION OF LATE.
"NOW, NORMALLY, I'D RELISH SUCH INEFFABLE COMPETITIVE SPIRIT.
"AN EASY TRIUMPH IN ANY CONTEST IS NOTHING MORE THAN A HOLLOW VICTORY, AFTER ALL.
"BUT WITH EACH NEW SNUB, I WAS SUDDENLY STRUCK WITH THE NOTION THAT PERHAPS MY FAMILY'S LONG-STANDING GAME MAY HAVE RUN ITS COURSE."
AN IMPRESSION THAT PROVED LAMENTABLY VALID DURING A RECENT JAUNT I UNDERTOOK TO VISIT SAID FAMILY. STARTING IN...


THE AMAZON RAINFOREST.
WOULD YOU LOOK AT THAT, MY CHILDREN...
...IT APPEARS WE'VE ARRIVED JUST IN TIME FOR A *BARBEQUE*.
AND APPARENTLY I'M SUPPLYING THE *HORS D'OEUVRES*.
HELLO, BROTHER...

...WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE.
AH, SISTER JAGWAR, THERE YOU ARE. AND DON'T YOU LOOK BLOODY RAVISHING--
--EMPHASIS ON BLOODY.
YOUR HANDIWORK, I PRESUME?
PARTIALLY.

I'M NOT ALONE.
I SEE. QUITE AN ENTOURAGE YOU KEEP HERE IN THE HEART OF DARKNESS, SISTER.
SAVE YOUR JUVENILE MOCKERY, RAT KING. THESE ARE THE GUARDIANS OF THE FOREST.
INDIGENOUS PROTECTORS SWORN TO EXTERMINATE THE PLAGUE OF CORPORATE THIEVES WHO ILLEGALLY PLUNDER THEIR JUNGLE HOME FOR PROFIT.
MM-HM.
AND YOU?
I AM THEIR PROTECTOR.
NOW, EXPLAIN WHY YOU ARE HERE, BROTHER, AND BE QUICK ABOUT IT--
--OUR MISSION AGAINST THESE CRIMINAL LOGGERS IS NOT YET COMPLETE.
THIS WON'T TAKE LONG, I PROMISE. I'VE MERELY COME TO UPDATE YOU ON KITSUNE'S RECENT ATTEMPT TO BRING BACK OUR DEAR OL' DRAGON-DAD.
'TWAS A VALIANT EFFORT BY OUR LITTLE SISTER, INDEED... YET NOTHING MORE THAN AN ABJECT FAILURE IN THE END.


I ASSUMED AS MUCH.
HAD SHE SUCCEEDED IN RAISING FATHER, THESE BURNING JUNGLES WOULD HAVE BEEN THE *LEAST* OF THIS PLANET'S CONCERNS.
FOOLISH GIRL WITH FOOLISH DESIRES.
THAT SAID, I AM ALSO HERE TODAY TO REMIND YOU THAT THE GAME *DOES* GO ON.
FEH. THE ONLY THING *MORE FOOLISH* THAN OUR SPOILED-BRAT SISTER'S DADDY ISSUES IS YOUR CONTINUED INVESTMENT IN THAT *RIDICULOUS* GAME OF YOURS.
GAME OF *MINE?*
I SEEM TO RECALL A TIME WHEN *YOU* WERE AS ENGAGED AS ANY OF US IN THE FUN OF IT.
EONS PAST, MAYBE. WHEN THERE SEEMED A *PURPOSE* TO IT ALL--AN ENDGAME WITH ONE WINNER TO RULE OVER ALL THE OTHERS...
...THE *LOSERS.*
BUT THE SMALL, SIMPLE REALM THAT WAS ONCE OUR PLAYGROUND HAS BECOME RATHER LARGE AND COMPLICATED NOW, AND I HAVE NO INTEREST IN THE SO-CALLED FIRST-WORLD CIVILIZATION YOU LOT *CONTEND* FOR.
IT'S A ZERO-SUM GAME OF DIVIDE AND CONQUER YOU PLAY, AND THE HUMAN MORTALS YOU USE AS PAWNS ARE NOTHING MORE THAN *MINDLESS SHEEP*...
...BLINDLY FAITHFUL TO INANE GOVERNMENTAL AND IDEOLOGICAL INSTITUTIONS, CHOOSING IMAGINARY SIDES THAT ARE REALLY ONLY *SEPARATE* PORTIONS CUT FROM THE *SAME* ROTTEN FRUIT.
I PREFER TO EXPEND MY ENERGIES HERE, IN THE *CENTER* OF IT ALL, WHERE THERE IS NO POLITICAL PRETENSE, NO FALSE PIETY. WHERE THERE IS ONLY ONE LAW... A WARRIOR'S LAW.
THE LAW OF THE JUNGLE.
AND WHAT OF THE *MUTANTS,* HM?
THEY GAVE YOU QUITE THE WARRIOR'S *CHALLENGE* DURING OUR CENTENNIAL BROUHAHA, DID THEY NOT?
CHALLENGE? HARDLY, BROTHER...

"...I REMEMBER THINGS SOMEWHAT DIFFERENTLY.
"STARTING WITH A PATHETICALLY FEEBLE...
"...AND EASILY REPELLED SNEAK ATTACK BY THE FILTHY CREATURES.
"ENDING WITH THEIR COWARDLY TECHNOLOGICAL RETREAT."*
*See TMNT #71-72 – B.C.
COWARDLY? I SEEM TO RECALL BROTHER MANMOTH PROCLAIMING THEIR ESCAPE TO BE QUITE CLEVER.
YES, WELL, OUR WOOLY BEAST OF A BROTHER MIGHT BE MASSIVE, BUT AN INTELLECTUAL GIANT HE SURELY IS NOT.
GODDESS, PLEASE FORGIVE MY INTERRUPTION, BUT THE OTHER TRUCKS ARE APPROACHING.
UNDERSTOOD.
TELL OUR WARRIORS TO RETURN TO THEIR AMBUSH POSITIONS.
GODDESS, IS IT? WHAT WAS THAT YOU SAID ABOUT BLIND FAITH, SISTER?
TRUST ME, THESE BRAVE SOULS OFFER THEIR FAITH TO ME WITH EYES WIDE OPEN.
AND BESIDES, WHAT'S THE POINT OF BEING AN IMMORTAL DEMI-GOD...

...IF YOU AREN'T WORSHIPPED AS ONE?
NOW EITHER STEP ASIDE OR JOIN THE BATTLE TO COME, RAT KING.
BY ALL MEANS, BATTLE AWAY, DEAR SISTER... BATTLE AWAY.
OH...
...I INTEND TO.
"AND SO, SHE DID.
"SHE AND HER GUARDIANS OF THE FOREST LAID THE PERFECT TRAP...
"...LURING IN THEIR ENEMIES AND THEN TAKING THEM DOWN WITH MERCILESS EASE.
"IT WAS QUITE THE SIGHT, BELIEVE YOU ME, AND IT DROVE HOME FURTHER THE DISAPPOINTING TRUTH MY SISTER'S EARLIER WORDS HAD CONVEYED--
"--THAT SHE'D REPLACED HER PASSION FOR OUR FAMILY'S GAME WITH AN OATH WRIT IN BLOOD FOR HER NEW TRIBE.
"DISAPPOINTING BUT TRUE... AND MY CUE TO MOVE ON FROM HER KILLING FIELDS TO WHAT I HOPED WOULD BE A MORE WELCOMING ABODE.
"AND SO, WITH ONE LAST ADMIRING LOOK AT JAGWAR'S SENSATIONAL SLAUGHTER, I STEPPED THROUGH THE THIN PLACES, AND INTO..."

THE DEN OF DELIGHTS.
HEADS UP!
WHAT'S THIS?
FWUP
A BIT OF A THROW-IN, THEN, GUV'NOR?
YOU KNOW, I'VE ALWAYS PREFERRED A GOOD...

...KICK!
SPLISH
TIME OUT! TIME OUT!
SOUND THE WHISTLE, ALBERTO, AND COMMENCE WITH THE INTERMISSION. THEN GO AND FISH THE *BALL* OUT FROM THE LAKE.
IT ABSOLUTELY WILL *NOT DO* TO HAVE ANOTHER ONE *DROWN* BEFORE THE GAME IS COMPLETE.

HELLO, TOAD BARON. IT IS GOOD TO SEE YOU.
AH, RAT KING! GREETINGS!
PUT YOUR WRETCHED BACKS INTO IT, BOB AND FRANZ! DO YOU WISH ME TO TUMBLE IN FRONT OF OUR GUEST?
MOMMY.
TO WHAT DO I OWE THIS UNEXPECTED--AND WHOLLY UNSOLICITED--SOCIAL CALL, GOOD BROTHER?
NOT ENTIRELY SOCIAL AS IT TURNS OUT.
I'VE COME TO DISCUSS THE BUSINESS OF GAMES, COINCIDENTALLY ENOUGH. OUR FAMILY'S GAME, TO BE EXACT.
OH... THAT. I'D HOPED I'D HEARD THE LAST OF IT AFTER LEARNING OF KITSUNE'S RECENT MISERABLE FAILURE.
FRANKLY, NONE WAS MORE RELIEVED THAN YOURS TRULY BY THE NEWS--FATHER WAS ALWAYS SUCH A PARTY-POOPER. HE CERTAINLY PUT THE "DRAG" IN "DRAGON."
BEG PARDON?
NOT YOU, STEVE.
WELL, THIS IS DEFINITELY A REVELATION.
OF ALL MY SIBLINGS, I THOUGHT IT WAS YOU WHO WOULD STILL MAINTAIN A HEALTHY APPETITE FOR FOLLY, TOAD BARON.
OH, I GREEDILY GOBBLE UP FOLLY FOR BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER, AND NUMEROUS NIBBLES IN BETWEEN, NEVER YOU WORRY.
IT'S JUST THAT THE OLD GAME HAS BECOME LESS A SCRUMPTIOUS REPAST AND MORE A BITTER PILL RECENTLY...
...ESPECIALLY SINCE THOSE MEDDLING MUTANTS INTERJECTED THEMSELVES INTO THE PROCEEDINGS.
IS THAT SO?
DO TELL.

WELL, IF I MUST.
IT ALL STARTED WITH THAT BOORISH SNOW FOX ALOPEX AND HER EQUALLY ILL-MANNERED PARTNER, THE HUMAN CALLED ANGEL BRIDGE.
"BOTH OF WHOM I SO VERY CORDIALLY INVITED INTO MY DEN OF DELIGHTS...
"...ONLY TO HAVE THEM TURN MY BEAUTIFUL BACCHANAL INTO A BEASTLY BARROOM BRAWL.
"THEN, AS YOU WELL KNOW, THOSE TACTLESS TERRAPINS OF TERROR TURNED UP TO RUIN OUR FAMILY'S CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION...
"AND IF THAT WEREN'T ENOUGH, THE FECKLESS FOURSOME INTRUDED INTO MY HUMBLE HOME ONCE AGAIN...
"...NOT TO MENTION A PLETHORA OF MY PRICELESS POSSESSIONS IN THE PROCESS.
"...THIS TIME ADMINISTERING THEIR ANIMALISTIC ABUSE AGAINST GOOD ALBERTO AND HIS FELLOW FROGS."
'TWAS UNDOUBTEDLY AN UTTERLY UNDESERVING UNDERTAKING FOR MY UNQUESTIONING UNDERLINGS, YOU UNDERSTAND.
MY KINGDOM FOR A WHEELCHAIR, FRANZ.
NO, BROTHER, WHAT WAS ONCE FOLLY, AS YOU SAY, HAS BECOME FAR TOO SERIOUS AN ENTERPRISE THESE DAYS. DESTRUCTIVE, DIRE, AND, AS I'M SURE DEAR OLD AKA WOULD ATTEST...
...DEADLY.

YOU DESCRIBED IT AS THE BUSINESS OF GAMES, AND YOU WERE HALF RIGHT. 'TIS BECOME MORE A TEDIOUS CORPORATE VENTURE THAN ANYTHING ELSE.
ME? I PREFER MY FUN TO BE, WELL... FUN.
ARE WE READY TO CONTINUE?
YES, MASTER.
NO SKIVERS 'ERE, MATE!
EXCELLENT. ALBERTO, IF YOU WILL?
PLAYERS TO THE PITCH!
YOU ARE MORE THAN WELCOME TO JOIN IN, BROTHER. I CALL THIS GAME NOGGIN KNOCKERS. MY VERY OWN INVENTION.
IT COMBINES FOOTBALL, RUGBY, GRECO-ROMAN WRESTLING, AND--SHOULD IT GO INTO EXTRA TIME--HORSESHOES, JUMP ROPING, AND BLINDFOLDED, ONE-ARMED CANASTA.
THANK YOU, BUT I THINK I'LL PASS.
ONE QUESTION BEFORE I LEAVE, THOUGH--
--WHY THE HILL?
WHY NOT?
BOB? FRANZ? HOP TO IT, YOU LACKADAISICAL LOUTS!
HALFTIME IS FINISHED.
I THINK MY HOP'S FINISHED, TOO, BOB.

TWEEE
"I REMAINED TO WATCH THE COMPETITION FOR A BIT.
"SUCH STRANGE SPORT.
"NORMALLY, I'M THE FIRST TO EMBRACE CHAOS...
"...BUT THE BEDLAM UNFOLDING BEFORE ME SOURED EVEN MY MOST ANARCHISTIC TASTES.
"AS I CONTINUED TO OBSERVE, MY MIND WANDERED BACK TO WHAT SISTER JAGWAR HAD SAID ABOUT ZERO-SUM GAMES. BROTHER TOAD'S ODD CONTEST WAS CERTAINLY ONE OF THOSE--NO WINNERS, NO LOSERS, NO RULES... A PSYCHOTIC STATUS QUO.
"WAS THIS ALSO TRUE FOR OUR FAMILY'S GAME? AND IF SO, WHAT WAS THE POINT OF PLAYING WITH NO DISTINGUISHABLE TROPHY TO STRIVE TOWARD?
"THE THOUGHT GENUINELY DISTURBED ME.
"AS UNCERTAIN AS I WAS BEGINNING TO FEEL, HOWEVER, I WASN'T YET READY TO THROW IN THE TOWEL. SO I TURNED MY SIGHTS TO..."

SIBERIA.
MY, MY...
...NOW WHAT SPORT IS *THIS?*
OH, HULLO, RAT KING.
THOUGHT I CAUGHT YOUR *SCENT*.
I'LL BE JUST A MOMENT.
COME, THEN, MANGY BEASTS.
THE TIME HAS ARRIVED TO *EAT* OR BE *EATEN*.

THAT'S THE SPIRIT!
SUCH FINE TEAMWORK.
WHOP
COMMENDABLE.
BUT FUTILE.
WHAP
AND THAT IS THAT.
WELL FOUGHT, MY CANINE COMRADES.

WELL FOUGHT, INDEED, BROTHER MANMOTH. COLOR ME *IMPRESSED*.
DON'T BE. ONE MISPLACED SLASH WITH MY BLADE AND IT WOULD HAVE JUST AS EASILY BEEN *ME* LYING IN MY OWN ICHOR.
STILL, YOU WERE *VICTORIOUS* IN THE END... UNLIKE SISTER KITSUNE. HAVE YOU HEARD?
YES. AND IF YOU ASK ME, THAT STUPID GIRL'S FAILURE *WAS* A WIN.
THE DRAGON'S RETURN WOULD'VE BROUGHT *RUIN* TO US ALL.
AND YET WE REMAIN STANDING--*MOST* OF US, AT LEAST--AND THE GAME PLAYS ON.
BAH.
IT'S AS I TOLD THOSE TURTLE MUTANTS WHEN THEY VISITED HERE--I *QUIT* THAT POINTLESS CHARADE LONG AGO.
THE MUTANTS? HERE?
I *THOUGHT* AS MUCH.*
*See TMNT #82-#84 – B.C.
A CRAFTY AND HARDY BREED, *THAT* LOT.
"I *FIRST* SUSPECTED IT WHEN WE FOUGHT THEM IN TOAD'S INSUFFERABLE HOVEL.
"A SUSPICION THAT PROVED *CORRECT* WHEN THEY BATTLED ME TO A *DRAW* ON THESE VERY SAME SNOW-COVERED PLAINS."

WELL, THEN, YOU MUST ADMIT, BROTHER, THEIR KIND OFFER A CHALLENGE HARD TO RESIST.
PERHAPS ENOUGH TO COAX EVEN YOU BACK INTO THE FRAY?
LOOK AROUND YOU, RAT KING. I LIVE EVERY SINGLE DAY OF MY LIFE IN THE FRAY.
AND AS FOR THE MUTANTS, OLD AKA HAD THE RIGHT OF IT WHEN SHE SAID YOU UNDERESTIMATE THOSE CREATURES AT YOUR OWN PERIL. SHE UNDERSTOOD THEY AREN'T DISPOSABLE PAWNS OR HELPLESS PLAYTHINGS TO BE TRIFLED WITH.
NO? WHAT ARE THEY, THEN?
SURVIVORS.
WELL... IT'S GETTING LATE, BROTHER, AND I'VE A LONG NIGHT OF SKINNING AND GUTTING AHEAD OF ME.
YOU CAN SEE YOURSELF OUT.
"I WATCHED HIM LEAVE, THE IRONY OF THE MOMENT NOT LOST TO ME.
"BROTHER MANMOTH HAD MOCKED MY DEVOTION TO OUR LONG FAMILY GAME-- A GAME HE TRIED TO CONVINCE ME WAS POINTLESS. AND YET THE TROPHIES HE CARRIED HOME WITH HIM ONLY SERVED TO MOTIVATE ME EVEN MORE.
"HIS CONTEST WITH THE PREDATORS WAS NOT POINTLESS. HE FOUGHT, HE WON, AND IN DOING SO, THE SPOILS OF VICTORY WERE HIS. UNLIKE TOAD BARON'S RIDICULOUS SPORT, THIS WAS MAYHEM WITH A PURPOSE.
"FROM JAGWAR TO TOAD BARON TO MANMOTH, IT WAS ALL BEGINNING TO COME TOGETHER FOR ME, IN A MOST UNEXPECTED FASHION.
"I WAS READY TO RETURN HOME WITH MY NEWFOUND KNOWLEDGE--AND DETERMINATION-- BUT FIRST, ONE LAST STOP WAS IN ORDER..."

THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST.
AND SO, THERE YOU HAVE IT, GOOD GOTHANO. KITSUNE FAILED, THE DRAGON IS VANQUISHED, AND THE GAME CONTINUES APACE.
WHAT SAY YOU, BROTHER? READY TO GET BACK INTO THE SWING... ER, SWIM OF THINGS?
NO.
OH.
"HONESTLY, NO SURPRISES THERE--"

--WHICH BRINGS ME BACK TO THE HERE AND THE NOW.
AND TO YOU.
YOU SEE, OTHER THAN BROTHER GOTHANO'S STEREOTYPICALLY SUCCINCT REBUFF, I WALKED AWAY FROM MY SEEMINGLY DISAPPOINTING FAMILY-REUNION TOUR THE BETTER FOR IT.
FIRST, SISTER JAGWAR REMINDED ME HOW IMPORTANT REAL STAKES WERE TO ANY GAME, INCLUDING OUR FAMILY'S.
YOU PLAY TO WIN, AND WINNING SHOULD MEAN SOMETHING... AS IT ONCE DID FOR US BEFORE WE LOST OUR ANCIENT HOME AND, WITH IT, OUR WAY.
NEXT, THE FRIVOLOUS TOAD BARON PUT MY OWN PENCHANT FOR MAYHEM INTO STARK PERSPECTIVE.
THE PATH TO VICTORY COMES WHEN CHAOS SERVES AS A MEANS TO AN END. CHAOS SIMPLY FOR CHAOS' SAKE IS A SURE ROAD TO DEFEAT AND MADNESS.
FINALLY, THE MIGHTY MANMOTH DEMONSTRATED TO ME THAT, NO MATTER HOW MUCH THE ODDS MIGHT BE STACKED IN ONE'S FAVOR, IT IS A DEADLY MISTAKE TO UNDERESTIMATE ANY FOE... OR ALLY, FOR THAT MATTER.
ULTIMATE TRIUMPH, AFTER ALL, IS THE DOMAIN OF SURVIVORS.
ADDING IT ALL UP, I REALIZE NOW THAT I'VE BEEN GOING ABOUT THINGS THE WRONG WAY.
ANARCHY, COERCION, SUBTERFUGE, AND HIJINKS... YET NE'ER A DISTINCT GOAL IN SIGHT.
CHAOS FOR CHAOS' SAKE. PLAYING JUST TO PLAY.
WELL... NO MORE.
I'M HERE TODAY TO ASK YOU TO JOIN MY TEAM. TO HELP ME MAKE THE OLD GAME NEW ONCE AGAIN. TO SEEK OUT AND WIN THE ULTIMATE TROPHY.
TO RULE THIS WORLD AND ALL WHO INHABIT IT.
TELL ME...
ARE YOU IN?

IF YOU FIND A WAY TO RID ME OF THIS ACCURSED, OVERSIZED LIZARD, I'LL JOIN ANY BLASTED TEAM YOU WANT!
FINE. BUT LET ME MAKE ONE THING CRYSTAL CLEAR...
I SET MY OWN TERMS.
YES... UNDER ONE CONDITION--
NULL
CEO, NULL INDUSTRIES
--THAT THIS PLANET IS ONLY THE BEGINNING.

I LIKE THE WAY YOU THINK.
FANTASTIC!
SQUEAK
THE TIME HAS COME TO SHOW ALL THE WORLD.
THE PANTHEON GAME IS DEAD.
LONG LIVE...
THE ARMAGEDDON GAME.

art by KEVIN EASTMAN
colors by FAHRIZA KAMAPUTRA

art by SOPHIE CAMPBELL

ISSUE #125

BURNOW ISLAND.
MONTHS AGO.
"HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN FEELING UNWELL, COMMANDER ZOM?"
IT'S BEEN INTERMITTENT OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS, DR. ZURA.
IS IT POSSIBLE YOU SUSTAINED AN INTERNAL INJURY DURING THE EPF ASSAULT THAT YOU WERE UNAWARE OF, AND IT'S ONLY NOW CATCHING UP WITH YOU?
I SUPPOSE, GIVEN THE EPF'S WEAPONRY.
IN ANY CASE, YOUR TESTS SEEM FINE. YOUR SODIUM IS SOMEWHAT LOW BUT OTHER ELECTROLYTES ARE NORMAL. NOTHING STRANGE.
PERHAPS THE FINAL FEW TESTS WILL SHOW SOMETHING, BUT YOU APPEAR IN GOOD HEALTH.
COMMANDER ZOM.
COLONEL CH'RELL IS READY FOR YOUR SCHEDULED COUNCIL MEETING.
HM.

WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, COLONEL?
I'LL GET RIGHT TO THE POINT.
OUR TWO PEOPLES ARE AT A CROSSROADS, COMMANDER.
I'M AWARE. WE BOTH SUFFERED FROM THE E.P.F. ATTACK.
STILL SUFFERING FROM IT, IN FACT.
AS YOU MAY KNOW, COMMANDER, NEWBORN UTROMS REQUIRE BIOLOGICAL HOSTS FOR INCUBATION...
...AND YOU TRICERATONS CAN ONLY *REPRODUCE* VIA *CLONING*.
YES. TWO DIFFERENT SITUATIONS BUT BOTH SERIOUS PROBLEMS THAT NEED CONSIDERATION.
COULD WE PERHAPS DISMANTLE PARTS OF THE TECHNODROME AND REPURPOSE THE TECHNOLOGY FOR BOTH CLONING *AND* INCUBATION?
OUT OF THE QUESTION.
COLONEL, YOU SAID YOU'D GET RIGHT TO THE POINT.
SO, OUT WITH IT.

VERY WELL, COMMANDER.
WE UTROMS ALREADY HAVE EVERYTHING WE NEED.
THESE PRESERVED TRICERATON BODIES WOULD MAKE PERFECT HOSTS FOR OUR NEWBORNS.
HOW DARE YOU, CH'RELL.
THESE ARE *FALLEN WARRIORS AWAITING CREMATION!*
THEY ARE NOT *HUSKS*, THIS IS NOT A *HATCHERY* FOR YOUR *SPAWN*.
ZOM IS RIGHT. OUR CULTURES ARE DIFFERENT BUT WE MUST RESPECT--
I AM DISGUSTED BY YOUR STANCE, MA'RIELL.
I'M SIMPLY THINKING AS A *PRAGMATIC LEADER*, SOMETHING *YOU* SHOULD BE DOING.
IT IS *IRRESPONSIBLE* TO DESTROY VIABLE HOSTS IN A MEANINGLESS FUNERARY DISPLAY *AND* TO DISMANTLE THE TECHNODROME'S VALUABLE TECHNOLOGY SIMPLY FOR *PROCREATION!*

ZOM! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? WHAT IS IT?
I JUST... NEED TO SIT DOWN...
...REGARDLESS, THIS MATTER INVOLVES THE VERY SURVIVAL OF THE UTROM PEOPLE, WE CANNOT LET OUR JUDGMENT BE CLOUDED!
COMMANDER!
PLEASE FORGIVE THE INTERRUPTION.
IT'S ALL RIGHT, DOCTOR, WHAT IS IT?
THE FINAL TESTS ARE COMPLETE, AND...
...YOU ARE *PREGNANT*, WITHOUT A DOUBT!
HOW COULD THIS *HAPPEN?* IT SHOULD BE *IMPOSSIBLE...*

THE PRESENT.
IN RESPONSE TO THE UNREST IN THE MUTANT ZONE, SUPPLY DROPS WILL CEASE UNTIL IT CAN BE DETERMINED WHETHER AERIAL VEHICLES ARE AT RISK OF BEING SHOT DOWN.
IN ADDITION, I'VE BEEN INFORMED THAT THE E.P.F. MAY BE INCREASING ITS PRESENCE WITHIN THE ZONE AND ACTING AS MARTIAL LAW, BUT THIS WILL REQUIRE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION...
MAYOR STOCKMAN
SIIIIGGHH
I GOT MY HOPES UP THAT BAXTER WOULD SEND IN SOME SNOWPLOWS.
GOD, ARE WE EVER GONNA CATCH A BREAK, APRIL?
NIIICE, OUR FIRST HUMAN STUDENT!
SO GLAD YOU'RE GONNA JOIN THE CLASS, CARMEN.
THANKS, MIKE. I CAN'T WAIT TO LEARN SOME OF THOSE SICK NINJA MOVES.

CARMEN, THIS IS JENNIKA AND DONATELLO. THAT'S EVERYONE.
NICE TO MEET YOU-- WAIT, *JENNIKA*, LIKE *SHEENA'S* JENNIKA? AND *CASEY'S* JENNIKA?!
UH, WELL...
DUDE, WHAT'VE YOU BEEN *SAYING* ABOUT ME?
NOTHIN', I SWEAR! JEEZ. COOL IT, JEN.
DAMN, YOU GOT A BIG MOUTH, CARMEN.
ALSO HOW DO YOU KNOW *SHEENA?*
HEH, OH, UM, SHE--
ALL RIGHT, EVERYONE, LET'S FOCUS HERE.
IT'S TIME FOR TRAINING.
AIN'T THERE SUPPOSED TO BE *SIX* OF YOU GUYS, THOUGH?
THE OTHER SENSEI, RAPHAEL, HE'S THE MUTANT TOWN CONSTABLE NOW SO HE'S VERY BUSY.

CARMEN, HERE...
LIKE THIS.
SPEAKING OF ABSENT, WHERE'S SHEENA TODAY?
YEAH, I'M A LITTLE WORRIED...
DR. BARLOW
MUTANT COSMETIC SURGERY SERVICES.
LOOK HOW YOU WANT TO LOOK
RECLAIM YOUR HUMANITY
WELCOME, WELCOME!

DON'T BE FRIGHTENED, MISS, CHUCK AND D.B. HERE WON'T HURT YOU.
I'M DOCTOR JASPER BARLOW! LET'S GET YOU CHECKED IN!
YOU'RE SHEENA MURPHY? THE ONE WHO INQUIRED ABOUT A HAIR GRAFT CONSULTATION?
YES, THAT'S ME.
UM, HAVE YOU DONE THIS KINDA THING BEFORE?
OH, YES, SEVERAL TIMES, WITH WONDERFUL RESULTS IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF.
RIGHT IN HERE.
IT GIVES ME NO GREATER PLEASURE THAN TO RESTORE SOMETHING SO FUNDAMENTAL TO ONE'S SELF-IMAGE AS THEIR HAIR.
SOMETIMES IT'S DIFFICULT TO FEEL HUMAN WITHOUT IT...
IT REALLY IS, YEAH.
REST ASSURED, THOUGH, I CAN HELP YOU.
I SPECIALIZE IN ALL SORTS OF COSMETIC PROCEDURES AND I'VE GIVEN MANY, MANY MUTANTS PIECES OF THEIR HUMANITY BACK.
MYSELF INCLUDED.

NOW, LET'S GET UNDERWAY...
YAAGH!
CLANK
FKSSHTT
HEH, OOPS. THAT SUCKS. SO MUCH FOR THAT BAT.
HEY, WEIRD, A *HUMAN*.

ALL RIGHT, PAL, WHERE'S THE *TURTLES?*
THIS HERE'S THE *TURTLE DOJO* OR WHATEVER, RIGHT?
MAYBE. MAYBE NOT. WHO'S ASKIN'?
OOF
THE PUNK FROGS!
RAAGH! THAT'S *IT!*
OH, YOU GOT IT COMIN' *NOW*, MAN!

GRK! GUYS! NEED HELP OUT HERE--
GONNA KILL YOU-- GAGH--
HE SAID "GUYS, HELP," HE WAS CALLING THE TURTLES, THIS'S GOTTA BE THE TURTLE PLACE!
RIGHT.
CLYDE, YOU DEFINITELY SURE YOU SAW A TURTLE TAKE BONNIE?
YES, ATTILA, I TOTALLY DID, THEY GOTTA HAVE BONNIE INSIDE!
ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT.

DID YOU GUYS HEAR SOMETHING...?
WELL WHAT D'YA KNOW, A WHOLE BUNCHA TURTLES.
CLASS IS OVER FOR THE NIGHT, SORRY.
YOU CAN COME BACK ON WEDNESDAY, IF YOU LIKE.
DOJO'S CLOSED, GUYS.
IT WAS *THAT* ONE, THE ONE WITH THE *WEIRD SHELL!*
HE'S THE ONE WHO I SAW TAKE *BONNIE!*
HEY, WAIT A MINUTE, I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO THIS BONNIE FRIEND OF YOURS IS. I DIDN'T DO WHAT YOU'RE ACCUSING ME OF.
LET'S ALL RELAX AND TALK ABOUT THIS. FIRST, INTRODUCTIONS.
I'M LEONARDO, THIS IS DONATELLO...

HEY, NO, STOP!
YOU DON'T WANT THIS TO TURN INTO A FIGHT.
SO TELL US WHAT YOU DID WITH BONNIE, THEN.
DON'T DO THIS. WE'RE NOT YOUR ENEMIES, AND MY BROTHER DID NOT DO WHAT YOU CLAIM HE DID. YOUR MISSING FRIEND ISN'T HERE.
WE CAN HELP YOU FIND YOUR FRIEND! COME ON!
I TRUST MY FRIEND HERE WHEN HE TELLS ME SOMETHIN'.
I KNOW WHAT I SAW!
LEO?
ATTACK.

GOT IT!
CARMEN! GO!
BRAK
AH--!
FIRE IN THE HOLE!
FWOOSH
WE NEED TO GET OUT. WE CAN'T PUT THIS FIRE OUT.
WE GOTTA GET APRIL AND LITA! OH, NO, KLUNK, TOO...!
BAM
AGH!
CARMEN!

BOK
STPH
WHOA.
TUNK
ACK!
WHAK
AGH--WE COULD REALLY USE *RAPH* RIGHT ABOUT NOW...!
WHAT ABOUT *ME?*

CASEY!
GET IN HERE!
EAT THIS, YOU STINKIN' FROGS!
ZUNGA ZUNGA!
WE HAVE TO RETREAT, YOU GUYS!
LET'S GO! WE GOTTA FIND LITA!
HACK
CASEY! COME ON!

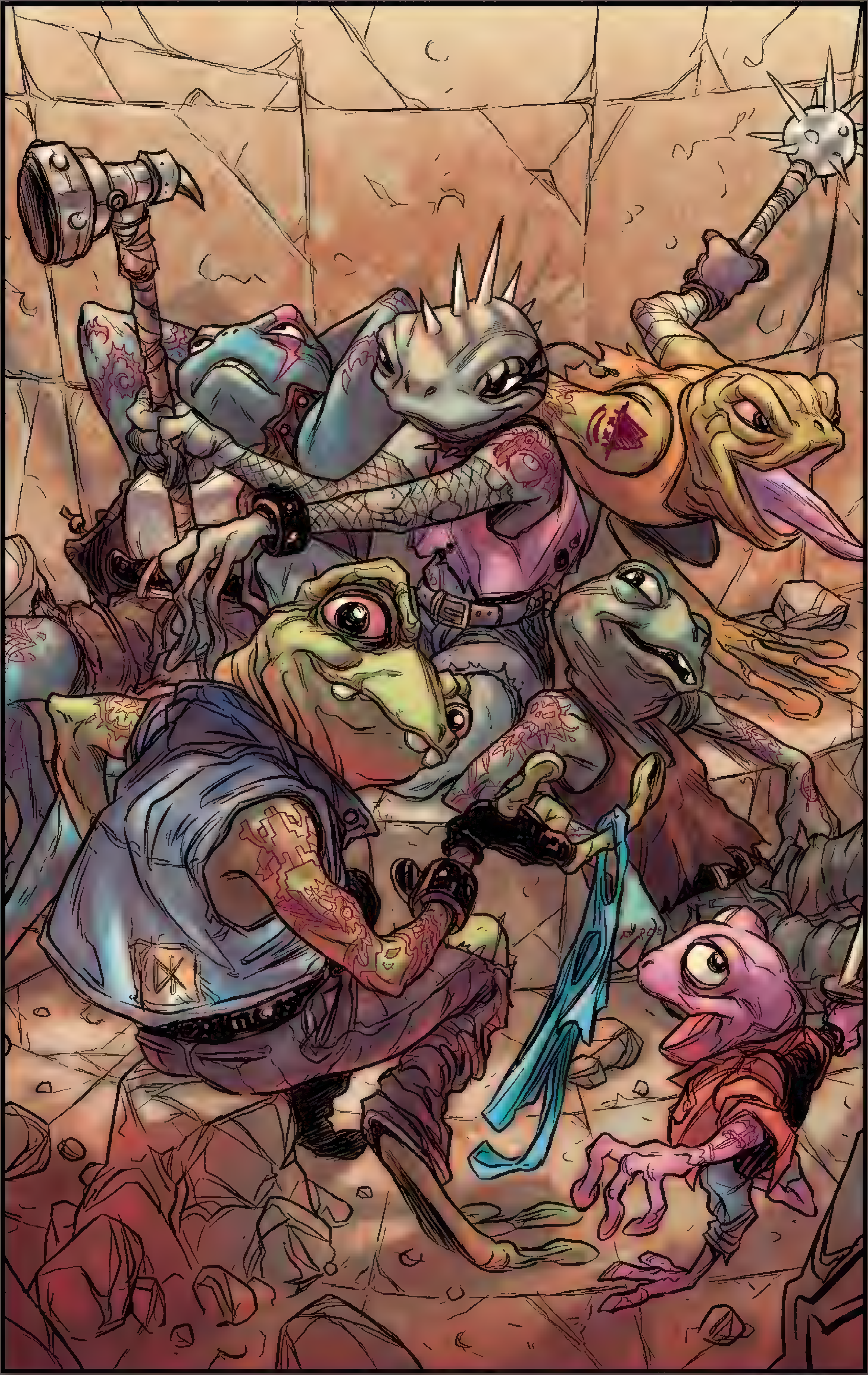
HACK
HACK
WHAT DO WE DO...?
NOTHING WE CAN DO.
CASEY...!

I CAN'T BELIEVE RAPH WASN'T HERE...
...I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.

COMMANDER, IT'S BEGINNING TO HATCH...!
OH, MY, WOULD YOU LOOK AT HER...
THIS IS TRULY INCREDIBLE. A TRULY MOMENTOUS DAY.
I AM STILL AMAZED BY ALL THIS, AND THOROUGHLY BAFFLED.
THE FIRST TRICERATON SINCE ZOG WHO ISN'T A CLONE...

MONTUORO, KLEVE... TELL ME SOMETHING.
DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED THE LAST TIME THE *SLAVES* OUTNUMBERED THE *MASTERS?*
BUT COLONEL, THIS IS ONLY ONE CHILD...
YES, KLEVE, BUT IT'S NONETHELESS *ALARMING...*
"...AND IS MOST LIKELY A SIGN OF *MORE TO COME.*"
HER NAME WILL BE...
...SERI.
SHE MARKS A NEW BEGINNING FOR THE TRICERATON PEOPLE.
WELL... THIS WILL NOT DO. NOT AT ALL.

art by KEVIN EASTMAN
colors by FAHRIZA KAMAPUTRA



art by PABLO TUNICA

ISSUE #126

BURNOW ISLAND.
MA'RIELL, DID YOU HAVE ANY LUCK REACHING THE TURTLES?
NO, I'M AFRAID NOT. I'M BEGINNING TO WORRY THAT SOMETHING MAY HAVE HAPPENED.
I WISH THEY COULD BE PRESENT FOR SERI'S CORONATION AS REGENTA.
"ESPECIALLY DONATELLO. SINCE HE HELPED BROKER OUR TRUCE, I'M SURE HE'D LOVE TO SEE THIS.
"BUT... PERHAPS IT'S FOR THE BEST THAT THE TURTLES AREN'T HERE FOR SUCH A GRIM AFFAIR AS A WARRIORS' FUNERAL."
YES, SERI, THOSE ARE OUR FALLEN COMRADES.
BUT HONORING THEIR DEATHS, AND YOUR BIRTH, MY LITTLE ONE, MARKS A HOPEFUL NEW BEGINNING.
SHE ALMOST SEEMS TO UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE SAYING, ZOM. SHE REALLY IS A *MARVEL*.
WE'RE ALL *VERY* EXCITED ABOUT THE SCIENTIFIC *POSSIBILITIES* HER BIRTH PRESENTS.

ALTHOUGH, I AM WORRIED ABOUT HOW OTHERS MIGHT VIEW HER...
SUCH A POINTLESS WASTE OF GOOD HOSTS...
AND THAT DISGUSTING INFANT.
SIR?
AH, NOTHING. JUST THAT BLASTED DROOLING BLOB OF A TRICERATON.
IT'S AN ABOMINATION, I AGREE.
RIGHT YOU ARE, KLEVE. WE CERTAINLY NEED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

TRUCE BE DAMNED.
CALL MONTUORO AND THE OTHERS. WE'LL DISCUSS.
YES, SIR.
ONCE THE INFANT IS TAKEN CARE OF, WE COULD USE THE CONFUSION AND LOSS OF MORALE...
...AND *ACQUIRE* THE TRICERATON HOSTS BEFORE THEY'RE CREMATED.
A DIFFICULT THING TO ACCOMPLISH. *HM.*
BUT NECESSARY. YOU CAN DEPEND ON ME.

THEIR RIDICULOUS TRUCE WAS MADE WITHOUT TAKING *YOU* INTO ACCOUNT, LITTLE ONES.
BUT DON'T FRET, I'M GOING TO *ENSURE* THAT YOU ARE THE *FUTURE*.
FIRST, WE MUST TAKE *CARE* OF THAT MEWLING *REGENTA*.

MUTANT TOWN.
WELL... THANKS FOR LETTING US SLEEP AT YOUR PLACE, MONA.
SURE THING. WHAT A MESS, YOU GUYS.
AT LEAST IT'S MOSTLY SALVAGEABLE. LOOKS LIKE THE LIVING QUARTERS SHOULD BE OKAY, BUT IT'S STILL GOING TO BE A HUGE EFFORT TO CLEAN UP.
NO MORE DOJO, THOUGH.
AT LEAST EVERYONE MADE IT OUT OKAY.
YOU OKAY, DONATELLO?
YEAH, JUST MY SHELL... SOMETIMES THE COLD MAKES IT ACHE.
NOW WE SHOULD TALK ABOUT WHAT TO DO.
REVENGE.
YEAH... REVENGE.
DAAANG, LEO, I DIDN'T EXPECT THAT. I LIKE IT.
HOLY CRAP, WHAT HAPPENED?!

HEY, GREAT TIMING, OFFICER RAPH.
LEO, WHAT HAPPENED?
WE WERE ATTACKED.
IT WAS THE *PUNK FROGS*. THEY CAME OUTTA NOWHERE, JUMPED ME OUT BACK, THEN STORMED THE PLACE.
OH, YEAH, THE PUNK FROGS. I'VE HEARD OF 'EM.
THEY ACCUSED *ME* OF KIDNAPPING A FRIEND OF THEIRS. COULD THERE BE ANOTHER MUTANT TURTLE OUT THERE?
WEIRD. OR MAYBE THEY WERE JUST CRAZY? OR CONFUSED?
HEY, YOU OKAY, BABE?
YES.
WE'RE *ALL* OKAY. WE'RE LUCKY NOBODY'S DEAD.

OKAY, RIGHT, SO... WHAT DO WE *DO?*
WE WILL, DONNIE. WE'LL GO INTO FROG TERRITORY TONIGHT, SO EVERYONE GET READY.
COOL. MONA AND I WILL DO THE BABYSITTING.
FIRST THINGS FIRST, WE GOTTA PAY THE *FROGS* A *VISIT.*
I JUST WANT TO FIGURE OUT WHAT'S GOING *ON*...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO IF YOU DON'T WANT TO.
NO, I DO. I WAS BEING SINCERE--THAT CAME OUT WAY MORE BLAH THAN I MEANT IT.
ANOTHER SLUMBER PARTY AT MONA'S TONIGHT, OKAY, LITA?
OKAY!

NO CASEY ON THIS MISSION, THOUGH.
WHY THE HELL NOT?
SORRY, MAN, BUT YOU AIN'T STEALTHY AT ALL, YOU'RE ALL BEAT UP, AND YOU'RE A LOOSE CANNON.
PFT! LOOK WHO'S TALKIN'!
CASEY'S COMING, RAPH. THAT'S THAT. HE HAS A STAKE IN THIS, TOO.
LEO, I'M GONNA BE THE ONE LEADIN' THIS MISSION AND--
RAPH, CAN YOU NOT BE THE CONSTABLE FOR, LIKE, FIVE MINUTES, PLEASE?
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
THERE'S A TIME AND A PLACE.
JUST GIVE IT A REST RIGHT NOW.
ALL RIGHT, EVERYONE JUST CUT IT OUT!

LISTEN TO MIKEY, YOU GUYS. COOL IT AND REST UP BEFORE TONIGHT.
LET'S GO BACK TO MY PLACE AND WARM UP. I'M *FREEZING*.
PUNK FROGS

OKAY, GUYS, WE'RE GONNA TRY AND TALK TO THE FROGS FIRST.
NOBODY THROWS ANY PUNCHES UNLESS WE GOT TO.
WOW, I LIKE MIKEY THE LEADER.
FROGS! FACE US!
WE'RE NOT HERE TO FIGHT!
WE JUST WANT TO KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON!
WEIRDO NINJAS GOT SOME BALLS SHOWING UP ON OUR TURF.
AND SAYIN' THEY DON'T WANNA FIGHT BUT THEN THEY GOT SWORDS AN' STUFF. HEH.

GET 'EM, FROGS!
Victory or Death!
KILL OR DIE!
WELL, THAT DIDN'T WORK.
SHUK
YOU CAN'T ATTACK US AND DESTROY OUR HOME WITHOUT CONSEQUENCES!
NOBODY MESSES WITH ME OR MY FRIENDS!
PROK
CLANC
OH YEAH, YOU'RE, LIKE, THE SHERIFF 'ROUND HERE?
WHERE'S YOUR, LIKE, POINTY POLICEMAN HAT?
SHUT UP!
TONK
YOU AGAIN WITH THE FRANKENSTEIN SHELL! YOU TOOK BONNIE!
I DIDN'T--!
WHAD
TWANG
COME ON, MAN, STOP--!

SHIRph
ALOPEX! DONNIE!
URK--
SWOF
GIMME THAT.
CRACK

HRNG!
FRAK!
WHERE'D RAPH GO?!
HE FELL OFF THE SIDE, I THINK!
STICK TOGETHER!
FLIP
FLOP
NINJ...
WHERE'D THEY GO?!
TAP

HUH, I GUESS THEY REALLY ARE NINJAS...
I STILL DON'T GET WHY THEY WEAR THOSE FUNNY MASKS.
I THINK IT'S CUTE!
CLYDE, THE TURTLE THING YOU DESCRIBED THAT TOOK BONNIE...
...IT DOESN'T SOUND ANYTHING LIKE THESE NINJA ONES.
IT... N-NO, IT WAS, I... I THINK? MAYBE IT WASN'T EXACTLY THE SAME...
SOMETHIN'S DEFINITELY GOIN' ON. WE GOTTA DEFEND OUR TURF, REGARDLESS...
RAPH!

WHO SAID I WASN'T STEALTHY, HUH?
YOU OKAY?
I'LL BE FINE.
CRACK
WE NEED TO FIND DONNIE AND ALOPEX.
YEAH.
THEN LET'S GET THE HELL OUTTA HERE AND COME BACK WITH REINFORCEMENTS.
UGH... YOU OKAY...?
I THINK SO. YOU?
I'VE BEEN WORSE. LET'S FIND A WAY OUT AND REGROUP.
WHAT THE...?

WHAT IS ALL THIS STUFF? SOMEONE MUST LIVE HERE...
NO TIME TO ADMIRE THE SCIENCE STUFF... C'MON.
SHH! SOMEONE'S COMING. VANISH.
FZZZZZT!
WHAT THE HELL IS THAT GUY? HE HAS METAL AND STUFF ALL OVER HIM...
SOMETHING IS DEFINITELY UP AROUND HERE...
...THE ONE FROG WITH THE SWORD SEEMED TO ACCUSE ME BECAUSE HE NOTICED MY SYNTHETIC SHELL.
COULD BE SOMETHING SIMILAR TO THE GRAFTS THAT BULL MUTANT HAD.
FLOP

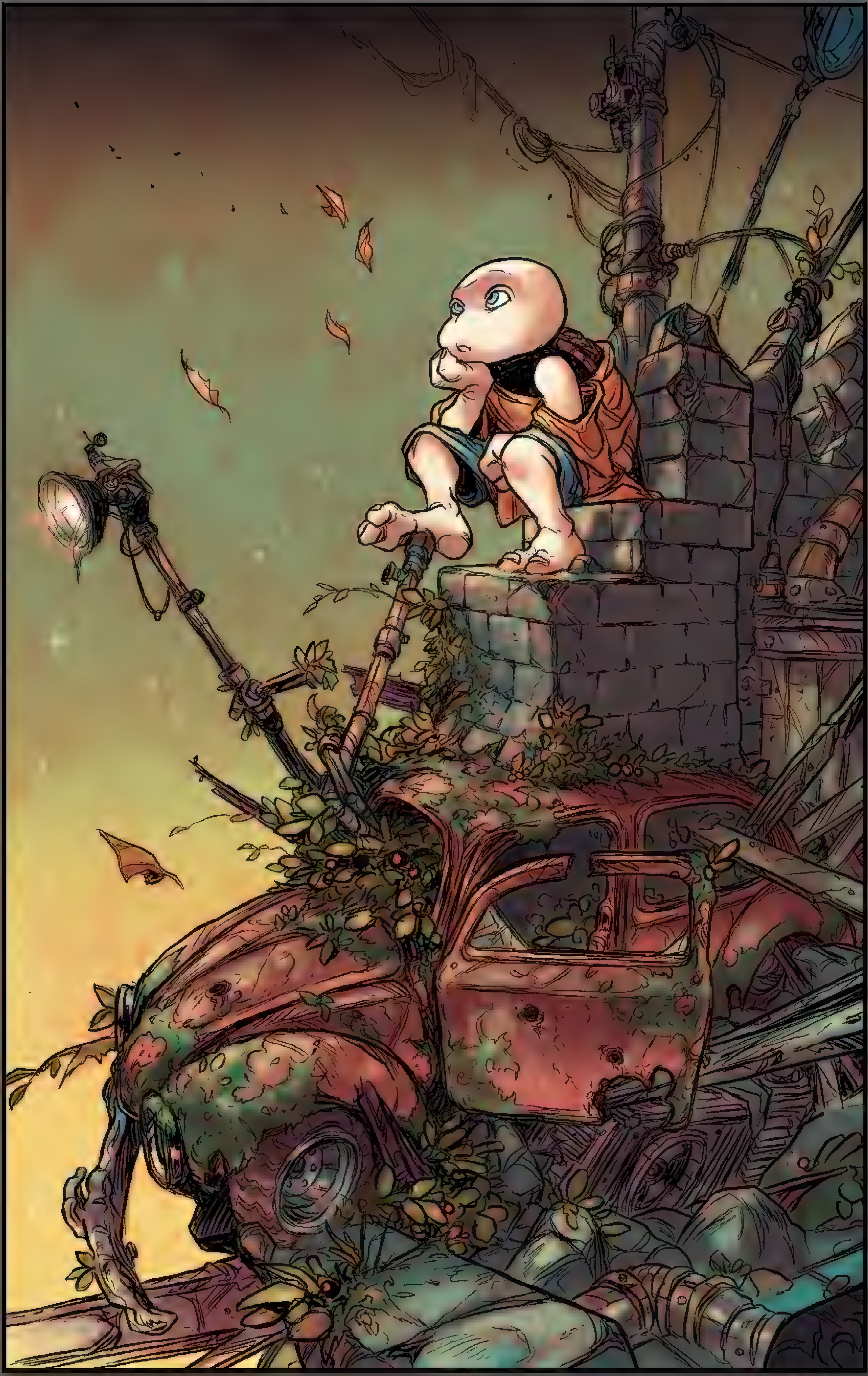
YEAH, LIKE SOME FRANKENMUTANT TOOK THEIR FRIEND?
THAT'S WHAT I'M STARTING TO THINK.
WHERE ARE ALL THE WINDOWS IN THIS PLACE?
WHY, HELLO THERE, MY FRIEND!
I'M JUST ABOUT TO SIT DOWN FOR SOME LADY GREY TEA-- WOULD YOU LIKE SOME?
MY NAME'S DR. BARLOW. DR. JASPER BARLOW... MAYBE YOU'VE HEARD OF ME?
DONNIE...
UM, I CAN'T SAY THAT I HAVE, BUT WE...
ARE YOU HERE FOR A CONSULTATION? FOR YOUR SHELL, PERHAPS?
EXCUSE ME?
WHAT KIND OF DOCTOR ARE YOU? I SAW A BUNCH OF MEDICAL LABORATORY EQUIPMENT BEFORE.
A SURGEON, TO BE EXACT, BUT ALSO A SCIENTIFIC RESEARCHER. YOU MUST BE SCIENCE-MINDED YOURSELF, HM?
WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO ON THE GRAND TOUR?

BURNOW ISLAND.
...AND HE'S SURELY PLANNING TO STRIKE AT SERI THE FIRST CHANCE HE GETS!
SERI MUST BE KEPT SAFE, BUT IF WE RETALIATE, OUR TRUCE MAY BE OVER.
NO MATTER...
...SERI IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE TRUCE.
AND WHILE CH'RELL IS AROUND, SHE WILL NEVER BE SAFE.
WE NEED TO DOUBLE OUR EFFORTS TO REACH THE TURTLES. WE'RE GOING TO NEED HELP.
WE ONLY HAVE FOUR PERSONAL SCOUT SHIPS LEFT, ENOUGH FOR US TO ESCAPE, BUT...
...I CANNOT LEAVE THE REST OF THE HERD HERE, EVEN TEMPORARILY. I CANNOT ABANDON MY DUTY TO THEM.
COMMANDER... I MAY HAVE AN IDEA TO PROTECT THE REGENTA, BUT IT'S DRASTIC.

COME!
THERE ARE MATURATION PODS IN THE REMAINS OF THE TECHNODROME, USED TO ACCELERATE TRICERATON CLONE GROWTH...
...INTENDED TO BE USED BY KRANG IF HE'D EVER COMPLETED HIS PLANS.
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, MA'RIELL? SERI ISN'T A CLONE!
YES, BUT HER PHYSIOLOGY IS STILL A MATCH FOR THE POD!
THE POD WILL ADVANCE HER TO MATURITY--A FULL TRICERATON ADULT.
WE WON'T HAVE TO SEND HER AWAY IF SHE'S ABLE TO DEFEND HERSELF.
I WANTED HER TO HAVE A CHILDHOOD.
I'LL NEVER FORGIVE CH'RELL FOR THIS.
HURRY! THE TECHNODROME IS NEAR.

YOU AREN'T GOING ANYWHERE, COMMANDER!
I'VE HAD IT WITH THIS SO-CALLED TRUCE THAT FAVORS YOUR PEOPLE AND DOOMS MINE.
THAT'S NOT TRUE, CH'RELL! PLEASE!
STAND DOWN, CH'RELL!
I DON'T BELIEVE I TAKE ORDERS FROM YOU.

art by KEVIN EASTMAN
colors by FAHRIZA KAMAPUTRA



art by PABLO TUNICA

ISSUE #127

MA'RIELL... GO...
KEEP SERI... SAFE.
CLIP CLAC
FOR THE HERD!
KRAK
FOR THE REGENTA!

STOMP
SAVAGES!
RATATAT
WHERE DID SHE GO?
FIND HER!
SHE HAS THE INFANT!
WE'RE ALMOST THERE, REGENTA.

TIP
TIP
TIP
TIP
TIP
I ONLY HOPE WE CAN REMAIN HERE UNDETECTED FOR LONG ENOUGH...
CLUF
GROWTH RATE
ON
2
YEARS
3
YEARS

5
YEARS
IT SEEMS THE BEST COURSE OF ACTION IS TO SEND YOU OFF THE ISLAND AFTER ALL, REGENTA.
THE SACRIFICE YOUR MOTHER AND THE GOOD DOCTOR MADE WILL NOT BE IN VAIN.
MEANWHILE, IN MUTANT TOWN.
YOU'VE REALLY PUBLISHED THAT MANY PAPERS? AMAZING.
I WAS QUITE A SOUGHT-AFTER SURGEON BEFORE THE MUTATION EVENT.
A PIONEER IN RECONSTRUCTIVE TECHNIQUES.
HURRY UP!
IT SEEMS LIKE YOU'RE MAKING THE BEST OF THIS SITUATION.
YOU STILL GET TO USE YOUR EXPERTISE TO HELP PEOPLE.
INDEED. I'VE ALREADY MADE INCREDIBLE LEAPS IN MY RESEARCH, TOO.
I WOULD LOVE TO SHOW YOU SOME OF IT SOMETIME.
YES, ABSOLUTELY. I--
ABOUT TIME!
OH GEEZ, RAPH...!
MAY I OFFER MY SERVICES? PLEASE, LET ME TEND TO YOUR INJURIES.
THANK YOU, UM...
DR. BARLOW.

YOU'RE VERY LUCKY, RAPHAEL--THE BOLT MISSED YOUR LUNG BY MERE CENTIMETERS.
THANKS, DOC.
THOSE PUNK FROGS ARE A MENACE, AREN'T THEY?
GOOD-FOR-NOTHINGS RUINING THE NEIGHBORHOOD, IF YOU ASK ME.
WELL...
HEY, DOC, YOU THINK I NEED STITCHES OR--
I DON'T TREAT HUMANS HERE, SIR.
HUH? WHAT?
EXCUSE ME... YOU'RE IN THE WAY.
MY DUTY HERE IS TO HELP MUTANTS REGAIN THEIR LOST HUMANITY...
...HUMANS HAVE NO PLACE IN MY PRACTICE.
THAT'S KINDA MESSED UP, MAN, DON'T YOU THINK?
I MEAN, IF SOMEONE'S HURT, THEN...

THAT'S THE POLICY HERE AT THE CLINIC.
WE TREAT ONLY MUTANTS WHETHER HUMAN- OR ANIMAL-BORN.
MY SPECIALTY IS, OF COURSE, HUMAN-BORN MUTANTS.
MUTATION TOOK SOMETHING FROM US, SOMETHING I CAN HELP RESTORE.
HEY, IT TOOK SOMETHING FROM ME, TOO.
I CAN SPOT A MUTANT'S ORIGIN BASED ON FACIAL FEATURES, BODY LANGUAGE...
...AND I SEE THAT THIS ONE IS THE ONLY HUMAN-BORN AMONG YOU.
JENNIKA, WAS IT?
I COULD DO WONDERS FOR YOU.
YEAH, WELL...
AND, DONATELLO! YOUR SHELL!
I COULD FIX ALL OF THAT. YOU'D NEVER BE IN PAIN AGAIN!
ALL RIGHT, I THINK I'VE HEARD ABOUT ENOUGH.
LET'S HEAD OUT.

THIS WAY.
I'LL ESCORT YOU OUT.
EXCUSE ME, DOCTOR...
...I'M JUST CURIOUS ABOUT WHAT SORT OF PROCEDURE YOU WOULD PERFORM. ON MY *CARAPACE*, I MEAN.
IT WOULDN'T BE DISSIMILAR TO A PATIENT I'M *ALREADY* WORKING WITH, IN FACT.
BUT I'D NEED MORE DETAILS ABOUT WHO CREATED YOUR CARAPACE... AND ITS *CONSTRUCTION*.
I'LL BE HONEST, DOCTOR, I FIND THIS ALL A BIT... *GRISLY*.
BUT I *AM* INTERESTED TO HEAR MORE.
I'D BE HAPPY TO SCHEDULE A *CONSULTATION* FOR YOU TO DISCUSS IT FURTHER.

LATER, AT THE SPLINTER DOJO...
STILL CAN'T GET A HOLD OF SHEENA.
SO WHAT'S THE PLAN FOR REINFORCEMENTS, RAPH? WE GONNA KICK SOME FROG ASS?
WE SHOULD GIVE ANGEL A CALL.
LEMME TAKE CARE OF IT.
WHAT ABOUT US?
THIS WAS OUR DOJO, TOO.
NO, IT'S TOO DANGEROUS, HECTOR.
BUT SENSEI, WE BEAT THE MUTANIMAL ENFORCERS!
I SAY, SURE. I'VE SEEN YOU GUYS FIGHT-- YOU'RE GOOD.
HOW'S YOUR HEAD, CARMEN?
MY SKULL'S READY FOR ROUND TWO.

JUST YOU THREE, THOUGH.
WE RETALIATE, WE TEACH THE PUNK FROGS A LESSON, WE GET OUT.
NO MORE, NO LESS.
WHILE MY DEPUTIES AN' I ARREST AS MANY AS WE CAN.
FAIR ENOUGH.
YEAH. GONNA CLEAN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD UP.
SO, GUYS, I HAVE A THEORY ABOUT ALL THIS.
THAT ONE FROG CLYDE ACCUSED ME OF KIDNAPPING THEIR FRIEND BONNIE BECAUSE OF MY SYNTHETIC SHELL.
HE SAID HE SAW SOMEONE WITH A SHELL LIKE MINE TAKE BONNIE.
SOME OF THE MUTANTS AT DR. BARLOW'S HAD PATCHES OF ORGANIC AND INORGANIC MATERIAL GRAFTED TO THEM...
...WHAT IF ONE OF THOSE MUTANTS IS INVOLVED? WHAT IF THERE'S SOMEONE ELSE WITH A GRAFTED SHELL OUT THERE?
IT'S A GOOD THEORY, DONNIE.
WE DEFINITELY SHOULD CHECK OUT DR. BARLOW'S HOUSE MORE.
IT'S NOTHING DEFINITE, BUT IT SEEMS LIKE TOO MUCH TO BE A COINCIDENCE.
WE CAN'T JUST GO SNEAKIN' INTO PEOPLE'S HOUSES WITHOUT HARDER EVIDENCE.
RAPH, ARE YOU SERIOUS RIGHT NOW?!

I'M THE CONSTABLE NOW, AL.
I AGREE WITH YOU, RAPH--WE CAN'T TREAT EVERY STRANGE OR WEIRD PERSON AS A POTENTIAL VILLAIN, BUT...
NAH, HE'S TOTALLY A BAD GUY... I KNOW EXPERIMENTAL TEST SUBJECTS WHEN I SEE 'EM. BUT WE STILL CAN'T JUST BUST IN THERE.
THE PEOPLE THERE ALL SEEMED WILLING, THOUGH.
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT LAWS OR REGULATIONS OR ANYTHING, BUT HOW MUCH MORE DO YOU NEED?
RAPH, YOU AND ME WERE BOTH EXPERIMENTED ON. YOU SHOULD BE BREAKING DOWN THE GUY'S DOOR--
ALOPEX, QUIET.
DON'T EVER TALK ABOUT THAT.
I FEEL SAD ABOUT THE PATIENTS, THOUGH.
THEY OUGHTA BE HAPPY THE WAY THEY ARE, RIGHT?
WELL... YES AND NO.
THAT'S A BIG, COMPLICATED, MESSY DISCUSSION, MIKEY, AND...
...I'M WAY TOO TIRED AND COLD RIGHT NOW.

YEAH. LET'S GET SOME REST.
CARMEN, WANDA, HECTOR, WE'LL BE IN TOUCH. BE READY.
HEY!
INSTEAD OF CRASHING WITH MONA AGAIN, WHAT IF WE STAYED AT THE OLD CHURCH BUNKER?
LATER.
MAN, I TOTALLY FORGOT HOW MUCH POTENTIAL THIS PLACE HAS.
WE COULD EVEN HAVE A NEW DOJO HERE, LIKE A COMMUNITY CENTER.
LITA, THIS IS OUR OLD HOME... ONE OF OUR OLD HOMES, ANYWAY.
IT LOOKS SCARY.
FWUP
LIGHTS STILL WORK...
YOUR SOFA IS STILL LUMPY, TOO, BUT IT'LL DO.

HEY, YOU!
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE UP TO. DON'T YOU DARE STEALTH OFF TO THE MAD SCIENTIST'S WITHOUT ME.
I... I WANT TO DO THIS ALONE, AL.
I KNOW SOMETHING IS OFF ABOUT DR. BARLOW, BUT... I STILL FEEL SORT OF A KINDRED SPIRIT IN HIM.
I WANT TO TALK WITH HIM BEFORE EVERYONE ELSE STORMS IN THERE.
FINE. BUT I'M STILL COMING.
YOU NEED BACKUP IN CASE THINGS GO WRONG.
OKAY. BUT I'M GOING IN THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR, SINCE HE DID INVITE ME BACK.
AND I'LL KEEP AN EYE ON YOU AND SNOOP AROUND WHILE YOU'RE CHATTING.

I HAD QUITE AN EVENTFUL EVENING--FULL OF SURPRISES!
I MET THE SPLINTER CLAN TURTLES AND THEIR FOX FRIEND... WHAT A STRANGE COINCIDENCE.
YES... INDEED.
IN ANY CASE, MEETING THE TURTLES GAVE ME SOME INSPIRATION FOR HOW TO PROCEED WITH ANOTHER ATTEMPT AT THE DOPPELGANGERS! I'M VERY EXCITED.
NO, NO, THIS APPROACH WOULD BE VERY DIFFERENT--IT WOULD HAVE NONE OF THE SAME PITFALLS AS THE OTHER FAILED ATTEMPTS.
WELL, UNFORTUNATELY, THE SPECIMEN NEVER ARRIVED AT THE SCHEDULED TIME.
NO, I HAVE NO IDEA WHERE IT MIGHT BE NOW.
I KNOW. I'M AS FRUSTRATED AS YOU ARE.
THANK YOU, ZIGGY.
I ASSUME I NEEDN'T REMIND YOU OF OUR ARRANGEMENT.
AFTER I'VE PERFORMED THE PROCEDURE, ONCE THEY'VE BEEN SEPARATED, THE BODY IS MINE FOR EXPERIMENTATION.

SIR.
A MISTER DONATELLO IS HERE TO SEE YOU.
OH! PLEASE EXCUSE ME... SOMEONE IMPORTANT HAS ARRIVED.
DONATELLO! IT'S WONDERFUL TO SEE YOU AGAIN SO SOON!
GOOD EVENING, DOCTOR.
I'M SORRY FOR NOT SCHEDULING AN APPOINTMENT.
IT'S QUITE ALL RIGHT. WHAT SEEMS TO BE ON YOUR MIND?
OBVIOUSLY, I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT MY SHELL...
...AND YOU SAID YOU HAD A PATIENT WITH A SITUATION SIMILAR TO MINE.
I DO. I'LL TAKE YOU TO MEET HER, IN FACT.
BUT FIRST, TELL ME EVERYTHING ABOUT YOUR CASE. WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR ORIGINAL CARAPACE?
WELL... I WAS ATTACKED, IT WAS DESTROYED...

...A REGENERATIVE SUBSTANCE WAS USED TO HEAL MY BODY AND PUT EVERYTHING BACK TOGETHER, BUT THE NEW SHELL'S NEVER *QUITE* FELT RIGHT.
EVEN THOUGH, BY ALL MEASURES, IT *SHOULD*.
UNQUANTIFIABLE *SOMATIC* PHENOMENA...
...OR AN UNDERLYING PHYSIOLOGICAL ISSUE *YET* TO BE UNCOVERED.
HERE.
THERE IS SOMETHING I WANT TO *SHOW* YOU, DONATELLO.
OH, WOW...
...IS THAT WHAT I *THINK* IT IS?!

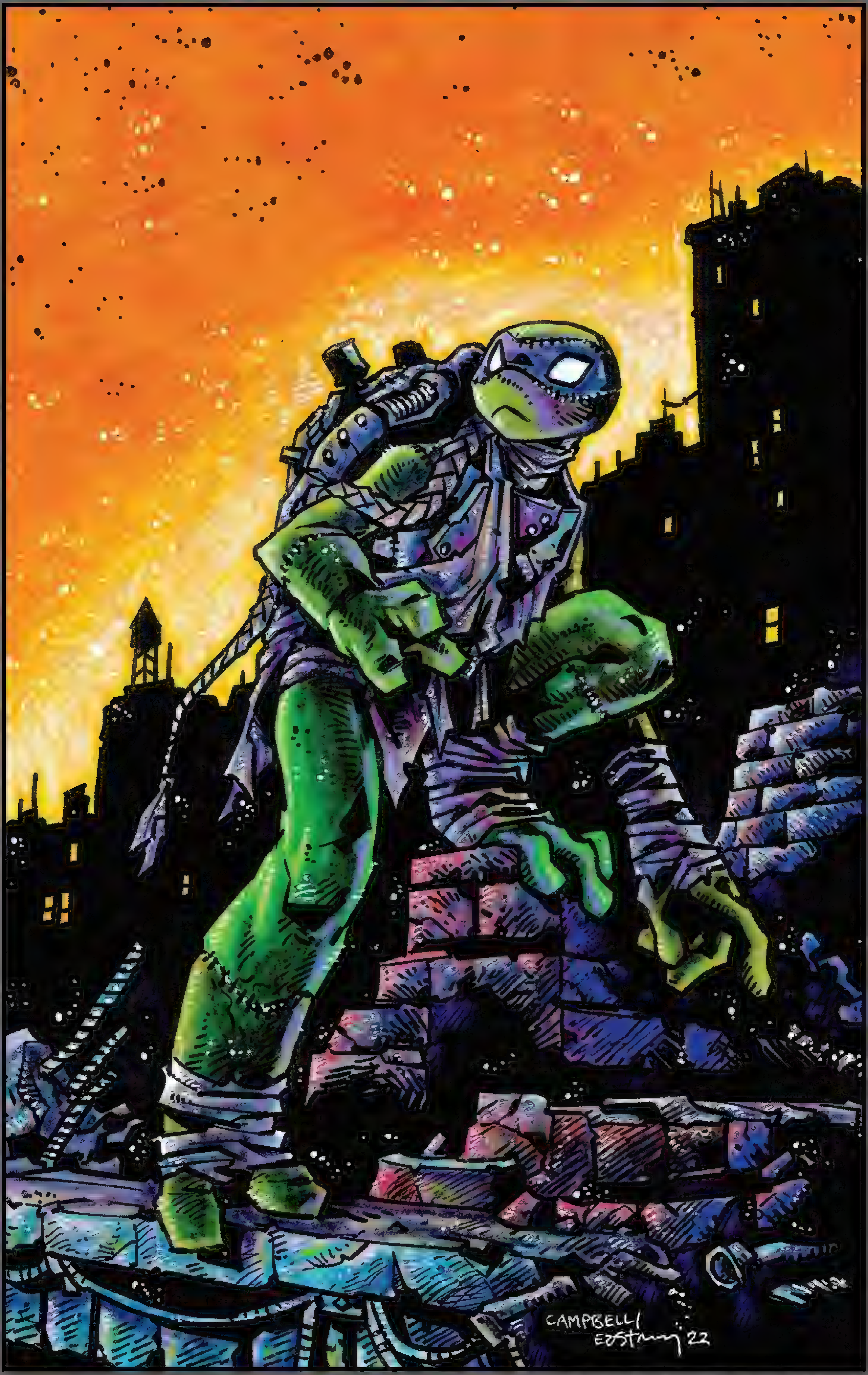
YES, TISSUE FROM *THE DRAGON* THAT NEARLY DESTROYED MANHATTAN!
I THOUGHT THEY CLEANED ALL OF IT UP!
THEY DID.
BUT I *SERENDIPITOUSLY* DISCOVERED SOME DISLODGED SCALES THEY HAPPENED TO MISS.
WHICH I THEN BEGAN TO *STUDY* AND *HARNESS*.
THE SCALES HAVE REMARKABLE *REGENERATIVE* PROPERTIES AS WELL AS *GENERATE* AN ENERGY TYPE I'VE YET TO *FULLY* UNDERSTAND.
MY DRAGON RESEARCH IS THE KEY TO MUCH OF THE WORK I DO HERE, INCLUDING THE SURGERIES DONE ON *MYSELF* TO ALTER MY *MUTANT MOUSE* FEATURES.
A WORK IN PROGRESS.
BUT, PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE SCALES ENABLE *REANIMATION* OF *DEAD TISSUE*.
I *KNEW* IT.

ZIP
SNIF
SNIF
I COULD USE MULTIPLE SCALES TO CONSTRUCT A NEW SHELL, A FULLY ORGANIC ONE.
THE DRAGON TISSUE WOULD *SEAMLESSLY* MERGE WITH YOUR BODY.
OR, IF YOU LIKE, WHAT ABOUT GROWING AN ENTIRELY NEW SKELETAL STRUCTURE *WITHOUT* THE NEED FOR YOUR TURTLE CARAPACE?

PROCK
ZISH
GRFFF
CHOMP
CHOMP
AAAH!
CHOMP
LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO MY OTHER PATIENT NOW, WHO HAPPENS TO BE UNDERGOING A SIMILAR PROCEDURE.

STOMP
OH GOD...
HERE SHE IS...

...I CALL HER
VENUS.



art by SOPHIE CAMPBELL & KEVIN EASTMAN

art by PABLO TUNICA

ISSUE #128

BURNOW ISLAND.
STILL NO SIGN OF THEM. OVER.
KEEP SEARCHING.
MY SISTER AND THAT DISGUSTING INFANT ARE IN THERE SOMEWHERE.
READY THE BODIES FOR HOST CONVERSION.
AND DISMANTLE THE TRICERATON SCOUT SHIPS FOR PARTS.
NOBODY LEAVES.

18
YEARS
CAREFUL, SERI. THE MATURATION POD JUST ACCELERATED YOU FROM AN INFANT TO A YOUNG ADULT. IT CAN BE DISORIENTING.
NORMALLY IT WOULD TAKE TIME TO ACCLIMATE, BUT UNFORTUNATELY, WE MUST LEAVE IMMEDIATELY.
YOU NEED TO COMMANDEER ONE OF YOUR PEOPLE'S SCOUT SHIPS AND ESCAPE.
I... UNDERSTAND...
SERI, TAKE THIS.
PLUG THIS NAVIGATION DISK INTO THE SHIP'S SYSTEM AND IT WILL LOCK ON TO THE BIOSIGNATURES OF SOME FRIENDS WHO WILL PROTECT YOU.
WE NEED TO SNEAK PAST CH'RELL'S SOLDIERS TO REACH THE SCOUT SHIPS.
STAY BEHIND ME, REGENTA.
YES, MA'RIELL.

REMEMBER THE INSTRUCTIONS I GAVE YOU.
I AM... NOT SURE I CAN DO THIS...
CLAC
OOPS.
THERE THEY ARE!
AH, FINALLY.
SOLDIERS, KILL THE TRICERATON BUT LEAVE ITS BODY INTACT.
AS FOR YOU, SISTER, I'M CURIOUS TO SEE HOW YOU TAKE TO PROLONGED STASIS, THE SAME WAY YOU KEPT ME SUSPENDED FOR SO LONG.
TRUST ME, IT'S NOT FUN.

MUTANT TOWN.
CRAP.
STROK
FZZZ
PLOC
DON! COME IN! WHERE THE HECK ARE YOU?!

WHAT...
...AGH!
BLOM

WHO *IS* SHE? TELL ME EVERYTHING...
I FOUND HER GRAVELY WOUNDED AND DYING IN AN ALLEY, ALONE.
SHE DIED ON THE OPERATING TABLE DURING EMERGENCY SURGERY, BUT WITH THIS DRAGON SCALE, I BROUGHT HER BACK TO *LIFE!*
AMAZING. DR. BARLOW, DO YOU KNOW WHO OR *WHAT* INJURED HER?
NO. BUT THROUGH EXTENSIVE SURGERY AND TRANSPLANTS, *PLUS* THE DRAGON SCALE'S REGENERATIVE PROPERTIES, I PIECED HER MANGLED BODY BACK TOGETHER.
AS YOU CAN SEE, SHE'S STILL AWAITING PERMANENT LIMB TRANSPLANTS.
OH! DOCTOR, HER EYES ARE OPEN... VENUS, CAN YOU HEAR ME?
SHE'S UNABLE TO SPEAK AT THE MOMENT BUT HOPEFULLY SOON. HER VOCAL CORDS ARE STILL HEALING.
DUE TO THE EXTENSIVE TRAUMA OF THE ATTACK AND BEING REVIVED, SHE ALSO SUFFERS FROM *ACUTE DELIRIUM*.
RECENTLY SHE EVEN MANAGED TO UNHOOK HERSELF AND ESCAPE THE LAB! I'M NOT SURE WHERE SHE THOUGHT SHE WAS GOING.

LUCKILY, MY STAFF AND I WERE ABLE TO RETRIEVE HER BEFORE SHE SUFFERED ANY FURTHER PROBLEMS.
IN ANY CASE, SEE WHAT I'VE DONE HERE WITH HER SYNTHETIC CARAPACE?
A SIMILAR PROCEDURE ON YOURS WOULD--
IF SHE TRIED TO ESCAPE, YOU CAN'T KEEP HER HERE. DOCTOR...
...WAIT, WHAT'S THAT FROG LIMB?
THAT'S ONE OF VENUS'S ORIGINAL LIMBS! SHE WAS A MUTANT FROG BUT NEEDED COMPLETE BODILY RECONSTRUCTION...
...INTO SOMETHING MORE LIKE A TURTLE, YOU MIGHT SAY.
BUT WHY?! SHE'S ONE OF THE PUNK FROGS, ISN'T SHE?! HER FRIENDS ARE LOOKING FOR HER!
I THOUGHT YOU HELPED RESTORE PEOPLE'S HUMAN FEATURES, NOT WHATEVER THIS IS!
AFTER VENUS DIED, I ADMIT SHE BECAME SOMETHING OF A GUINEA PIG FOR MY EXPERIMENTS.
PLEASE UNDERSTAND, DONATELLO, SHE WAS CLINICALLY DEAD BEFORE THE DRAGON SCALE REVIVED HER!
UNFORTUNATELY, SHE'S LARGELY A FAILED EXPERIMENT, BUT HER BODY STILL HOLDS VALUABLE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES.
I'M SORRY... BUT THIS--THIS DOESN'T SIT RIGHT WITH ME, DR. BARLOW.
YOU JUST CAN'T DO THIS TO HER.
VENUS, ARE YOU THE MISSING PUNK FROG?
BONNIE, I THINK HER NAME WAS?
CAN YOU GIVE ME SOME KIND OF SIGN IF YOU UNDERSTAND ME?

I THINK I USED TO BE BONNIE, BUT... MY MEMORIES ARE FUZZY.
AH--!
PLEASE...
...HELP ME...
DOCTOR! SHE CAN COMMUNICATE. SHE'S--SHE'S SPEAKING TO ME TELEPATHICALLY RIGHT NOW...
YOU'RE SURE? THE DRAGON SCALES HAVE OPENED LATENT PSIONIC ABILITIES, BUT I WASN'T SURE IF VENUS HAD THE POTENTIAL!
YOU HAVE TO SET HER FREE.
NONSENSE. SHE'S INCOMPLETE AND THERE'S STILL SO MUCH TO BE LEARNED FROM HER.

SFICT!
WHAT DID... WHAT IS THIS...
A COMBINATION OF CARFENTANIL AND MIDAZOLAM.
I APOLOGIZE FOR HAVING TO DO IT THIS WAY. I HOPE YOU CAN FORGIVE ME.

ALOPEX...! SHEENA! WAKE UP...
IT'S ME... VENUS. ARE YOU THERE? YOU'RE THE FIRST PERSON I'VE... EVER BEEN ABLE TO CONTACT LIKE THIS...
YES! I'M HERE.
ARE YOU ONE OF BARLOW'S EXPERIMENTS, TOO? I SAW YOUR SHELL...
NO, BUT YOU AND I HAVE SIMILAR TRAITS IN THAT WAY, I GUESS.
MY NAME'S DONATELLO.
I'M GOING TO GET YOU OUT OF HERE.
BUT CAN YOU TELL ME WHY HE'S TURNING YOU INTO A TURTLE, VENUS? WHAT'S HIS PLAN?
I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A... DOPPELGANGER. A COPY OF SOMEONE ELSE.
HE SAID HE WAS COMMISSIONED TO DO IT, THAT THE PROJECT WAS A FAILURE.
BUT HE KEPT ME AROUND FOR HIS EXPERIMENTS.
DAMMIT... I KNEW ALL THIS WAS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE.

DONNIE...
...I SAW... A BUNCH OF OTHER MESSED-UP TURTLE MUTANTS, TOO... SOMEWHERE ELSE IN HERE...
ALOPEX!
HELLO, ALL. IT'S TIME TO BEGIN.
DR. BARLOW, PLEASE, THIS IS SUPREMELY UNETHICAL!
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE A DOCTOR AND A SCIENTIST!
I'M NOT GOING TO HURT YOU. I'M GOING TO HEAL YOU.
FOR PEOPLE LIKE ME, MUTATION HAS BEEN A LIVING NIGHTMARE.
THERE WILL NEVER BE A CURE TO COMPLETELY AND CLEANLY REVERSE IT. A SUBJECT'S DNA IS TOO DAMAGED...
...BUT THROUGH MY WORK AND EXPERIMENTATION...
...THERE'S AT LEAST SOME HOPE.
AND AS FOR ETHICS, DONATELLO...
...I'M PREPARED TO BE JUDGED BY MY COLLEAGUES SHOULD THAT TIME COME, BUT HONESTLY...
...THIS IS MUTANT TOWN. THERE ARE NO ETHICS HERE.

FIRST, I'D LIKE TO EXPOSE YOU TO THE SCALE'S ENERGY...
...IT'LL PREPARE YOUR BODY FOR THE DEBILITATING PHYSICAL TRAUMA TO COME.
IT WILL BE DIFFICULT, BUT ULTIMATELY REWARDING, I PROMISE.
LEAVE HIM ALONE! GONNA RIP ALL YOUR THROATS OUT!
THE DRAGON'S CELLS CONTAIN ENERGY FORMATIONS THAT SEEM IMPOSSIBLE...
CLIC
...ENERGY THAT CONNECTS TO A LARGER WEB OF ELECTRO-MAGNETISM...
...UNFATHOMABLE, THAT I'VE ONLY BEGUN TO GLIMPSE...

DONATELLO...
...DON'T LET IT OVERPOWER YOU...
HOW...
MOVE THROUGH IT, NOT AGAINST IT...
...JUST...
...BE WITHIN IT. LIKE A RIVER...
...THE DRAGON'S POWER IS JUST A KEY TO A DOORWAY THAT WAS ALWAYS THERE.
BE WITHIN IT... YEAH.
I'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE.
I KNOW THIS PLACE... THE ASTRAL PLANE.

MY BROTHER LEO TRIED TO TEACH ME THIS.
ASTRAL PROJECTION.
BUT I GUESS I WASN'T READY.
VENUS, ARE YOU STILL THERE?
I'M RIGHT HERE.
WHAT...

...I KNOW WHERE I AM.
THIS IS MY *PAST LIFE*...
WHAT?
IT'S VERY CONVOLUTED, BUT MY BROTHERS, FATHER, AND I WERE *REINCARNATED* AFTER LIVING AND DYING A LONG TIME AGO...
...IT ALWAYS FELT SO... CLOSED OFF FROM ME. SO UNQUANTIFIABLE AND UNKNOWABLE. EASY TO DISMISS.
I'VE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO REMEMBER ANY OF IT THE WAY LEO COULD. I USED TO THINK IT WASN'T TRUE... REINCARNATION, PAST LIVES... IT SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE.
I SUPPOSE I WAS ALWAYS SECRETLY *JEALOUS* OF LEO AND THE GLIMPSES HE'D REMEMBER... HOW EFFORTLESS IT WAS FOR HIM.
BUT NOW... I THINK HE MIGHT BE JEALOUS OF *ME*.

FATHER...
...WHY DID YOU LEAVE ME?
I MISS YOU SO MUCH.
IS THIS REAL, THOUGH?

IS THIS JUST A HALLUCINATION INDUCED BY DR. BARLOW AND HIS DRAGON SCALES?
IS IT THE ASTRAL PLANE'S ECTOPLASMIC MATTER JUST SHOWING ME WHAT I WANT TO SEE?
IT'S REAL.
REMEMBER, THE DRAGON'S POWER IS A KEY.
THAT'S ALL IT IS.
THANK YOU, VENUS.

BURNOW ISLAND.
BEAUM
SERI! GO!
BEAUM
BEAUM
AAAH!
BEAUM
MA'RIELL, STOP THIS!
BEAUM
BEAUM
BEAUM

BEAUM
BEAUM
BEAUM
CLIC
DON'T YOU DARE BLAST OFF, OR I'LL CRUSH MA'RIELL TO A PULP!
MA'RIELL...!
HE WON'T KILL ME. GO NOW!

FWOSH
MOTHER...
SEARCHING BIOSIGNATURE
MANHATTAN
...I'LL AVENGE YOU.
CH'RELL WILL PAY. I PROMISE.

art by KEVIN EASTMAN
colors by FAHRIZA KAMAPUTRA

art by PABLO TUNICA

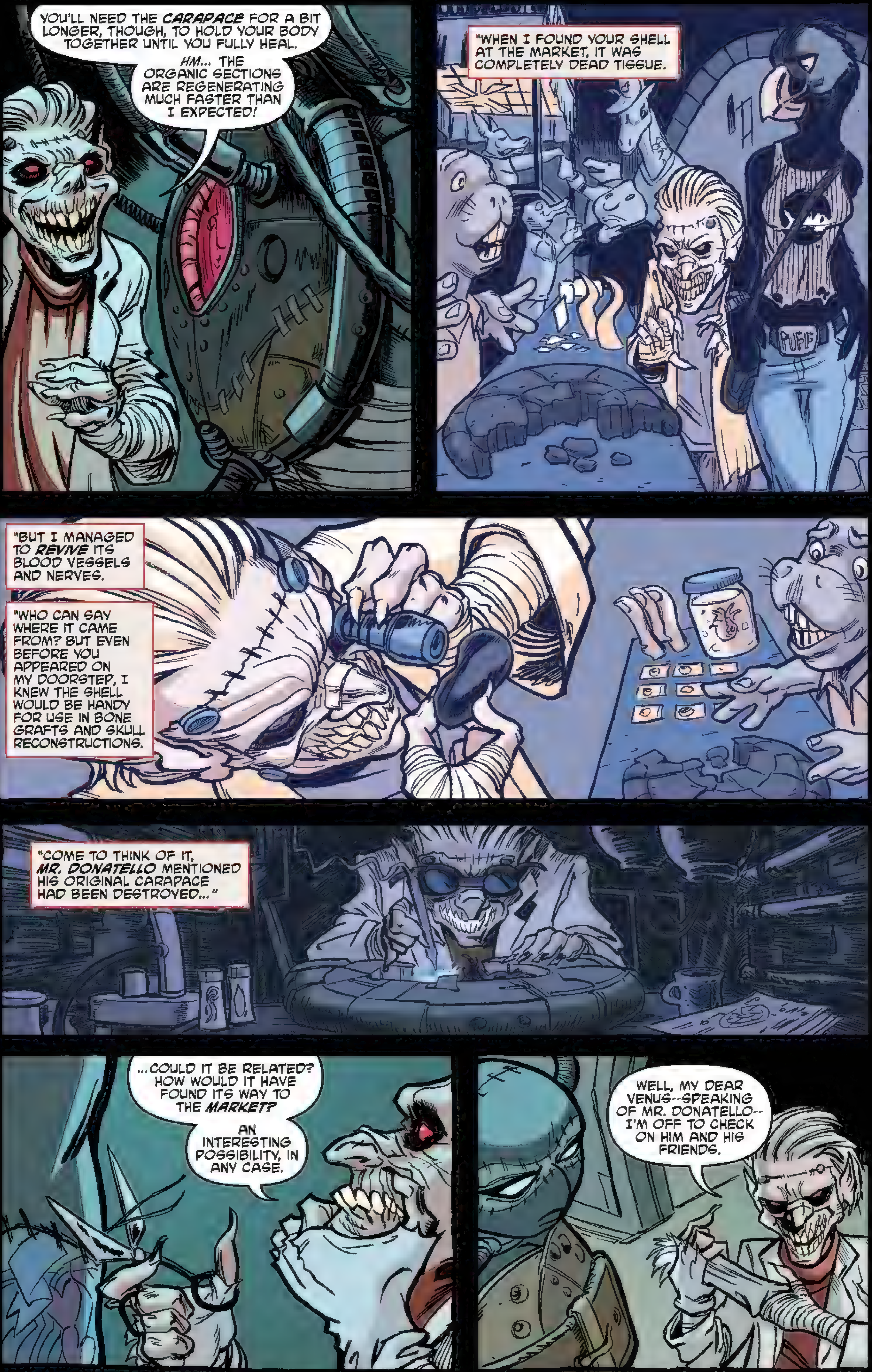
ISSUE #129

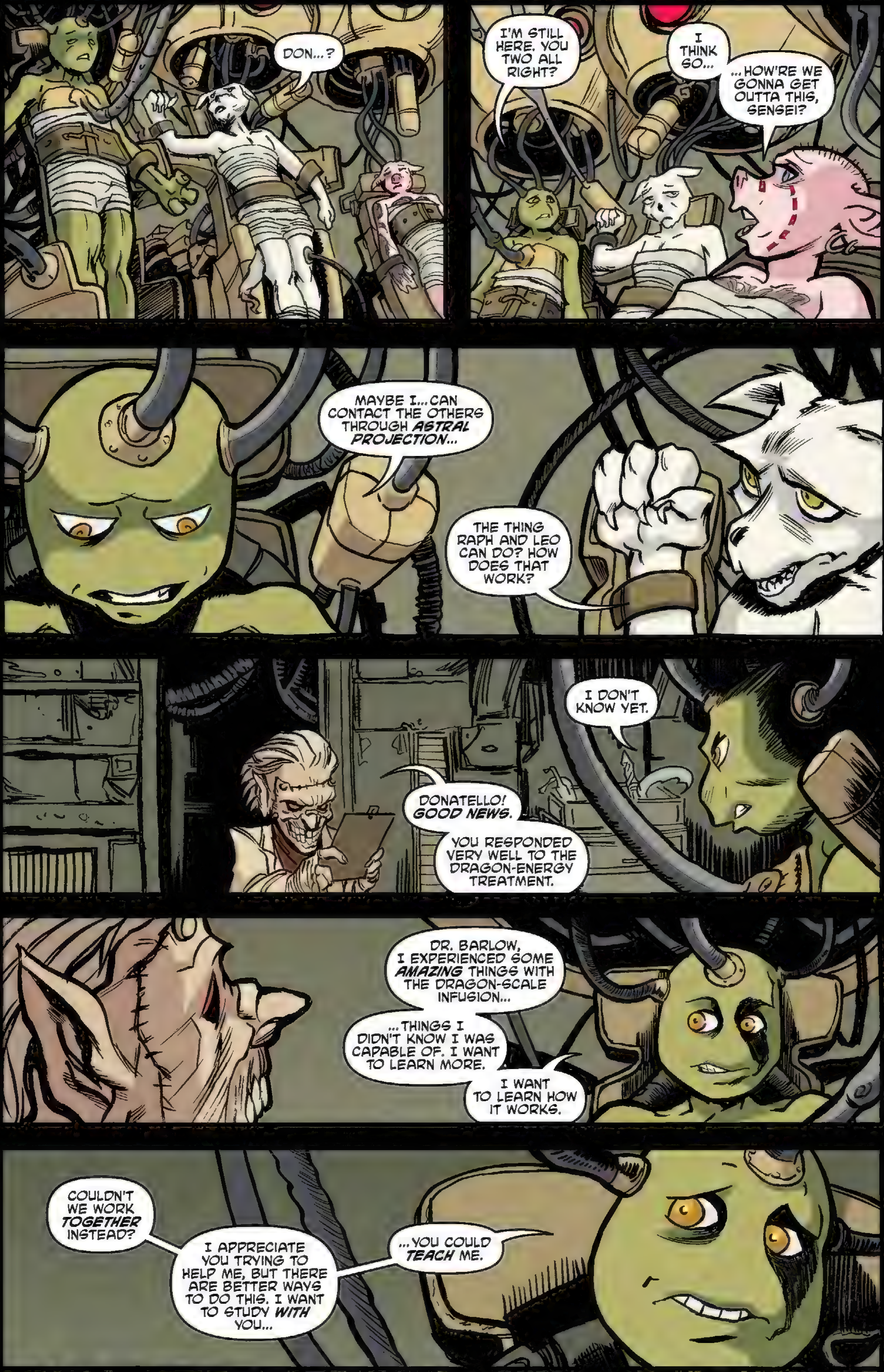
THE DAY OF THE MUTAGEN BOMB.
999
NUTS! WHAT'RE WE GONNA DO UNTIL NINE?
COME ON, GENGHIS. THIS IS NEW YORK-- THERE'S TONS OF STUFF TO DO.
HEY, ZETIAN, GUESS WE OUGHTA TRY AGAIN TO FIGURE OUT HOW THE SUBWAY WORKS, HUH?
SIGH
RASPUTIN, WE GOTTA HEAD HOME TOMORROW.
WHY BOTHER FIGURING OUT THE SUBWAY NOW?
YEAH, DUMMY! WHY BOTHER?
UGH, I DON'T WANNA GO HOOOOME, YOU GUYYYS! FORT LAUDERDALE SUUUCKS.
FART LAUDERDALE, RIGHT, MARY?
I DUNNO. I THINK IT'LL BE NICE TO GET HOME...
HAHA! OH MY GAWD, FART LAUDERDALE.
HEY... WHAT IS THAT?

AAAH!
WOWWW... IS IT, LIKE, ST. PATRICK'S DAY OR WHATEVER?
COME ON, BONNIE!

PRESENT DAY.
CASEY.
HEY. YOU SEEN ALOPEX OR DONNIE?
WHA? NO, UH, DON'T THINK SO...
LOOK, UH, ARE YOU OKAY?
HUH? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.
I SAW ALL THE BEER CANS AT YOUR PLACE, YOU KNOW?
I JUST DON'T WANT YOU TO END UP LIKE YOUR OLD MAN, AND--
WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY TO ME?!
YOU BEEN A REAL JERK LATELY, RAPH.
FIRST YOU DITCH ME, THEN YOU ACT ALL HIGH AND MIGHTY.

UNFF!
I'M SICK OF IT!
DR. BARLOW'S LAB.
I APOLOGIZE AGAIN FOR REMOVING ALL YOUR LIMBS, VENUS, BUT I HAD TO BE SURE WE WOULDN'T HAVE A REPEAT OF LAST TIME. I'M TRUSTING YOU THIS TIME.
THESE AREN'T YOUR PERMANENT LIMBS, ANYWAY. I'M STILL DESIGNING YOUR LEFT HAND.
YOU WON'T NEED THE FROG LIMB MUCH LONGER.
NOW THAT OUR CLIENT AND I HAVE MOVED ON TO OTHER PROCEDURES, I DON'T NEED TO FASHION YOU INTO A MAKESHIFT TURTLE ANYMORE.
I CAN PERFORM AN ARRAY OF SURGERIES ON YOU TO MAKE YOU LOOK MORE HUMAN AGAIN. AS YOU SHOULD.


YOU'LL NEED THE CARAPACE FOR A BIT LONGER, THOUGH, TO HOLD YOUR BODY TOGETHER UNTIL YOU FULLY HEAL.
HM... THE ORGANIC SECTIONS ARE REGENERATING MUCH FASTER THAN I EXPECTED!
"WHEN I FOUND YOUR SHELL AT THE MARKET, IT WAS COMPLETELY DEAD TISSUE.
PUFIF
"BUT I MANAGED TO REVIVE ITS BLOOD VESSELS AND NERVES.
"WHO CAN SAY WHERE IT CAME FROM? BUT EVEN BEFORE YOU APPEARED ON MY DOORSTEP, I KNEW THE SHELL WOULD BE HANDY FOR USE IN BONE GRAFTS AND SKULL RECONSTRUCTIONS.
"COME TO THINK OF IT, MR. DONATELLO MENTIONED HIS ORIGINAL CARAPACE HAD BEEN DESTROYED..."
...COULD IT BE RELATED? HOW WOULD IT HAVE FOUND ITS WAY TO THE MARKET?
AN INTERESTING POSSIBILITY, IN ANY CASE.
WELL, MY DEAR VENUS--SPEAKING OF MR. DONATELLO--I'M OFF TO CHECK ON HIM AND HIS FRIENDS.


DON...?
I'M STILL HERE. YOU TWO ALL RIGHT?
I THINK SO...
...HOW'RE WE GONNA GET OUTTA THIS, SENSEI?
MAYBE I...CAN CONTACT THE OTHERS THROUGH *ASTRAL PROJECTION*...
THE THING RAPH AND LEO CAN DO? HOW DOES THAT WORK?
I DON'T KNOW YET.
DONATELLO! *GOOD NEWS*.
YOU RESPONDED VERY WELL TO THE DRAGON-ENERGY TREATMENT.
DR. BARLOW, I EXPERIENCED SOME *AMAZING* THINGS WITH THE DRAGON-SCALE INFUSION...
...THINGS I DIDN'T KNOW I WAS CAPABLE OF. I WANT TO LEARN MORE.
I WANT TO LEARN HOW IT WORKS.
I APPRECIATE YOU TRYING TO HELP ME, BUT THERE ARE BETTER WAYS TO DO THIS. I WANT TO STUDY *WITH* YOU...
...YOU COULD *TEACH* ME.
COULDN'T WE WORK *TOGETHER* INSTEAD?

WE COULD DELVE INTO THIS NEW FIELD OF RESEARCH TOGETHER.
PLEASE, DOCTOR.
I WILL CERTAINLY CONSIDER IT, DONATELLO! OH, JUST THE IDEA TAKES ME BACK TO MEDICAL SCHOOL, TEACHING FIRST-YEAR RESIDENTS AND EAGER NEW INTERNS...
...BUT IN THE MEANTIME, HERE IS YOUR NEW CARAPACE.
IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE MUCH NOW, BUT IT WILL TAKE ON A FULLY ORGANIC STATE ONCE THE DRAGON TISSUE IS INTRODUCED.
IT'LL MEAN NO MORE ACHES AND PAINS AND--IF YOU WISH--WE CAN LEAVE THE SCALE INSIDE SO YOU'LL HAVE DRAGON ENERGY AT YOUR DISPOSAL AT ALL TIMES. JUST LIKE VENUS!
DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE ACTUALLY CONSIDERING ALL THIS.
NO, I... WELL...
...OKAY, OKAY, I'LL GET US OUT.
VENUS... ARE YOU THERE?
YES.
I NEED HELP... I NEED TO REACH OUT TO MY BROTHER LEO...OR ANYONE.
FOCUS ON HIS FACE.
THIS IS MAGIC BUT...THERE'S STILL SCIENCE TO IT.
THERE ARE STILL RULES, PROCESSES, MEASUREMENTS...

...IT MUST HAVE ENERGY AND FORCE, LIKE EVERYTHING DOES.
WHERE IS EVERYBODY?
I HAVEN'T SEEN DONNIE OR ALOPEX... BUT I SAW RAPH HEAD BACK INSIDE.
I'LL GO GRAB HIM.
OKAY, CARMEN, HECTOR, WANDA--YOU'LL WAIT WITH RAPHAEL AND HIS DEPUTY, MONTY.
ONCE WE'VE STEALTHED INTO FROG TERRITORY AND FOUND WHERE THEY HIDE OUT, WE'LL CALL YOU IN AFTER THE FROGS ARE PINNED DOWN.
AND THEN-- UH...
YOU OKAY, LEO?
I JUST... I THINK DONNIE'S IN TROUBLE...

HAHA. OF COURSE YOU GUYS ARE JUST BEATING THE TAR OUT OF EACH OTHER DOWN HERE.
COME ON, CASEY, YOU GOT THIS! YANK HIS BANDANA!
WHAT?!
ARGH-
UM. YOU TWO LOOK LIKE YOU GOT SOME CRAP TO SORT OUT, BUT WE'RE ALL READY TO HEAD BACK INTO FROG TERRITORY.
YEAH. WE'LL BE RIGHT OUT.
HEH. WHEW.

HEH-HEH.
HEH-HAHA! WHAT THE HELL'S WRONG WITH US?
HA! I DUNNO, MAN.
FOR REAL, THOUGH... I'M STILL PISSED AT YOU. HEH.
HEH. YEAH, I CAN TELL.
STUFF'S BEEN TOUGH, Y'KNOW, EVER SINCE MY DAD... OUR DADS...
...WELL... YOU KNOW.
YEAH, I KNOW.
AND, LIKE... I'M HERE FOR YOU, BRO. YOU KNOW THAT, RIGHT?
YEAH...
...SAME.

I'M HERE.
OROKU SAKI? WHY... WHERE'S LEONARDO?
YOU NEED MY HELP.
YES, BUT...
MY ASTRAL PRESENCE IS STRONG. YOU WERE DRAWN TO ME.
LET ME HELP YOU, DONATELLO.
ALL RIGHT.

WHAT IN THE--
WHAT THE HELL, DON--YOU CALLED *HIM?*
I DIDN'T MEAN--*AH,* FORGET IT.
WAIT--
THIS IS THE WORST DAY *EVER!*
VENUS! *HOLD ON!*
UNNGH...

RADIO SILENCE. WAIT FOR MY GO-AHEAD.
GOT IT. KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR ALOPEX AND DONNIE.
OKAY, GUYS. NOW WE WAIT TILL THEY FIND THE FROG HEADQUARTERS.
THEN WE'LL BE RIGHT BEHIND 'EM.
MONTY
YEAH, GONNA BRING THE FIGHT TO THOSE PUNKS!
I DON'T HAVE THAT FEELING FROM DON ANYMORE. I THINK HE WAS TRYING TO CONTACT ME ASTRALLY.
DANG, HE LEARNED HOW TO DO IT?
I GUESS HE MUST HAVE.
THE FROGS MUSTA GOT HIM. THEY MIGHT EVEN HAVE SHEENA, TOO.
I NEVER COULD GET AHOLD OF HER.
GOD, I HOPE SHE'S OKAY...
IS IT WEIRD THAT FIRST THE FROGS' FRIEND BONNIE IS MISSING, THEN *SHEENA*, AND NOW *DON* AND *AL?*
THINKING THE SAME THING, MIKEY. WE'RE MISSING SOMETHING.

IF I WERE A PUNK FROG, WHERE WOULD I MAKE MY HIDEOUT...
HMM. THEY SEEMED LIKE ACTUAL PUNKS. THEY REMIND ME OF MY PUNK, METAL-HEAD DAYS--I ACTUALLY USED TO GO CLUBS AROUND HERE A LOT...
THERE!
OH, DAMN, THE 999--I SAW MERCILESS SLAUGHTER THERE ONE TIME...
I HEAR VOICES.
I KNEW IT.
I JUST KNOW THEY'RE GONNA ATTACK US AGAIN!
RELAX, DUDE. WE TOOK CARE OF 'EM LAST TIME. WE CAN DO IT AGAIN.
YEAH, LIKE, TOTALLY!
IT'S GONNA BE OKAY, CLYDE.

THEY SEEM A LOT LIKE *US.*
LEO, WE COULD BE *PALS* WITH THESE GUYS...
RAPH. WE FOUND THEM.
ON OUR WAY.
CASEY, YOU KNOW WHERE THE *999 MUSIC HALL* IS?
MONTY
FOLLOW ME.

SEE?! I KNEW THOSE TURTLES WOULD FIND US!
WHERE ARE THEY?! WHERE ARE ALOPEX AND DONNIE?! YOU GOT 'EM SOMEWHERE!
I DUNNO WHO YOU'RE TALKIN' ABOUT, MAN!
ALL RIGHT, YOU'RE ALL UNDER ARREST BY ORDER OF MAYOR PRIDE.
OKAY, FROGS! DO IT JUST LIKE THE PROTEST IN MIAMI THAT ONE TIME!

PUNK FROGS
MONTY
SFNKT
CARMEN!

THANK YOU.
COME ON, LET'S GET *OUT* OF HERE.
WAIT--
--I SENSE SOMETHING.
THEM.
BAP
KRAK
WHFF
SNAP

SHR-RAAAK
THAT WAS INCREDIBLE, VENUS!
CAN YOU ZAP THE OTHER ONE?
EEEK!
NOT NOW, DON. SHE BOUGHT US TIME. WE GOTTA RUN!
NO... ENERGY SPENT...
...WAIT...
GOTTA FIND THE OTHERS! C'MON!
MUTANT COSMETICS SURGERY SERVICES
I SENSE SOMETHING ELSE...
WHAT--OH, I SEE IT!

WHAT IS THAT?
WE NEED TO MOVE. FAST.
KRA KOOM
DR BARLOW
MUTANT COSMETIC SURGERY SERVICES
HUMANITY

art by KEVIN EASTMAN
colors by FAHRIZA KAMAPUTRA

art by JOHN YURCABA

ISSUE #130

KROOMM

WHAT WAS THAT?!
HEY, ATTILA, SHOULD WE, LIKE, KEEP FIGHTING, OR...
GET 'EM!
FROGS!
WE'RE OUTTA HERE!
GUYS?
IS SHE GONNA BE OKAY, LEO?
I DUNNO, JENNY. I...I NEED TO GET HER BACK TO THE LAIR.
WE CAN CATCH 'EM OUTSIDE! C'MON, RAPH!

WAIT--
OKAY, DUDE, LET'S JUST COOL IT.
I'D MUCH RATHER US BE FRIENDS, YOU KNOW? MY NAME'S MIKEY.
WHY WOULD YOU WANNA BE FRIENDS WITH SOMEONE WHO BURNED DOWN YOUR HOUSE?
I KNOW, IT'S CRAZY, BUT... I JUST HATE ALL THIS--
GENGHIS? WHERE'D YOU GO?
MIKEYYYY! WHERE ARE YOU?!

WELL... SEE YA 'ROUND, MAN.
NAME'S GENGHIS, BY THE WAY.
SEE YA, GENGHIS.
MIKEY! DID YOU SEE WHERE THEY WENT?!
NAH. THEY GOT AWAY, I GUESS.
WE SHOULD GET BACK TO THE LAIR. LEO'S ALREADY ON HIS WAY WITH CARMEN.
DAMN. WE WERE SO CLOSE.
WERE WE, THOUGH?

NOT FAR AWAY...
WHAT WAS THAT? MAYBE A GAS EXPLOSION?
NO WAY. I TOTALLY SAW SOMETHING COME DOWN FROM THE SKY, LIKE MAYBE A MISSILE.
HELLO? IS ANYONE STILL ALIVE IN THERE? DR. BARLOW?
I HOPE HE'S DEAD.
MAKE SOME NOISE SO WE CAN FIND YOU!
WE GOT YOU!
THANK YOU...
FROOP!
OH NO... YOU AGAIN!

HELLO? ATTILLA? RASPUTIN? ZETIAN? GUYS...
PROK
...WHERE ARE YOU?!
WATCH OUT!
GUYS? IS THAT YOU?
STOMP
BROOF
LEAVE BONNIE ALONE, YOU DUMB COW!
BONNIE?

FLAP
EEEEK!
GET OFF HER!
STOP!
STOPPP!
LEAVE US ALONE!
NEVER AGAIN!

PRATT
LEAVE
PRATT
US
SHEENA!
ALO...
SHEENA... STOP.
GRRR
YAAA!
WE DID IT!
BONNIE, WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU? WHERE'D YOU GET THAT SHELL THING?

IT WAS YOU, WASN'T IT?
"I SAW YOU THAT ONE NIGHT, NOT SOME OTHER TURTLE PERSON."
THAT'S RIGHT, CLYDE.
I DIDN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH WHAT HAPPENED TO HER.
I'M SORRY, DUDE, FOR REAL. YOUR NAME'S DON, RIGHT? I JUST THOUGHT... YEAH...
...GUESS WE'LL JUST GO. C'MON, BONNIE, LET'S FIND EVERYONE ELSE.
HEY, WAIT. SHE'S NOT BONNIE ANYMORE.
VENUS, YOU CAN COME WITH US IF YOU WANT.
YOU HAVE A PLACE WITH ME AND THE REST OF MY FAMILY.
WE HAVE A CONNECTION, RIGHT? WE CAN BOTH LEARN FROM EACH OTHER.
COME WITH US, VENUS... PLEASE.
MY FAMILY AND I COULD HELP YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR MAGIC AND HELP YOU REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE.
WE SHARED SOMETHING BEFORE... DIDN'T WE?
WHAT'RE YOU TALKIN' ABOUT?! SHE'S COMIN' WITH ME!

CLYDE, LET HER GO. LET HER MAKE HER OWN CHOICE.
SHE DOESN'T REMEMBER YOU.
CAN IT, CREEP! SHE'S MY GIRL! BONNIE, LET'S GO!
LET ME GO!
VENUS, I... I'M SORRY...
I MEANT WHAT I SAID, ABOUT YOU COMING BACK WITH US. YOU'LL BE SAFE THERE.
I... I CAN'T...
I'M SORRY, CLYDE, BUT I DON'T REMEMBER YOU.
I'M NOT WHO YOU THINK I AM.
THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING, DONATELLO.
WE'LL SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN. I KNOW IT.

BONNIE IS GONE.
SHEENA!

OH MY GOD, BABY, YOU'RE OKAY! ARE YOU OKAY?!
THE DOCTOR'S HOUSE BLEW UP?
NOT REALLY.
I THOUGHT FOR SURE THE FROGS GOT YOU, AL.
WHAT THE HECK HAPPENED, DONNIE?! IS EVERYONE ALL RIGHT?
NOT SURE WHAT THE EXPLOSION WAS, BUT THE REST OF IT...
I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT IT SOME OTHER TIME, MIKEY.
WHERE'S LEO?
HE TOOK CARMEN BACK TO THE LAIR... SHE WAS BANGED UP PRETTY BAD.
CRAP, YOU GUYS, SOMEBODY'S IN THERE! I HEAR 'EM!
HELP! PLEASE HELP ME!

IT WAS A... SPACESHIP?!
LOOKS TRICERATON.
PLEASE HELP!
CLAF
OH! THANK YOU!
WHO ARE YOU?
I AM SERI, REGENTA OF THE TRICERATONS, I'VE COME FROM BURNOW ISLAND.
I'M LOOKING FOR TURTLES. ARE YOU TURTLES?
YEP, THAT'S US! I'M MICHELANGELO.
ONE THING AFTER ANOTHER, HUH, BABE?

ALL RIGHT, GANG, LET'S SPLIT BEFORE THE *E.P.F.* SENDS IN A *TEAM* TO CHECK ON THIS EXPLOSION. DON'T WANNA RUN INTO THEM.
OH MAN, RAPH, THEY'RE GONNA TAKE THE SPACESHIP, AREN'T THEY?
PROBABLY. NOTHIN' WE CAN DO ABOUT IT NOW.
WE SHOULD CLEAR OUT OF HERE, THOUGH.
WE'LL GO BACK TO THE LAIR AND FIGURE THIS ALL OUT, OKAY?
YES, THANK YOU.
HEY, MAN, YOU OKAY? I KNOW YOU WERE KINDA HOPING TO BE FRIENDS WITH THAT BARLOW GUY.
YOU DON'T EVEN SEEM INTERESTED IN WHAT THIS TRICERATON CHICK'S ALL ABOUT...
I'M FINE.
I CAN'T BELIEVE I EVER WENT TO DR. BARLOW. *UGH.*
I MIGHT'VE DONE IT, TOO. I GET IT.
LET'S GO HOME AND GET YOU FIXED UP, OKAY? POOR BABY.

YOU KILLED IT OUT THERE TONIGHT, BRO. FELT GOOD... LIKE OLD TIMES.
STOMP
HA! DID YOU FORGET WE LOST?
YEAH, BUT WE'LL GET ANOTHER SHOT. THOSE FROGS CAN'T RUN FOREVER.
DAMN STRAIGHT.
GOOD EVENING.

WHO ARE YOU? STAY AWAY FROM ME.
MY NAME IS BLUDGEON. YOUR NAME IS...
...VENUS?
HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT?
I HAVE MYSTICAL INCLINATIONS, TOO, BUT NOWHERE NEAR YOUR POWER.
YOUR AURA IS IMMENSE. I SAW IT FROM ACROSS THE CITY.
WHAT DO YOU WANT? WHY DID YOU COME FIND ME?
BECAUSE YOU SEEM LIKE YOU COULD USE SOME HELP, THAT'S ALL.
NOW, COME, LET'S GET YOU SOME HOT TEA AND SOUP.

ELSEWHERE.
BONNIE'S DEAD.
YEAH, ZETIAN, SHE'S REALLY GONE FOR REAL...
THE TURTLES DIDN'T DO IT. I MESSED UP. IT WAS ALL A BIG, STUPID MISTAKE, AND I'M SORRY, GUYS.
CLYDE, YOU **BUTTHEAD**.
PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER AND LET'S GO.
POOR BONNIE...
EWW, THAT'S HER **ARM?**
SHOW SOME RESPECT, BLOODY MARY. SO SHE'S REALLY GONE...
THAT TURTLE COP'LL BE GUNNIN' FOR US.
WE GONNA FIND A NEW HIDEOUT, ATTILA?
YEAH.
THEN WE'RE GONNA FIND A WAY **OUT** OF MUTANT TOWN.
BYE, VENUS...

I NEVER SHOULD HAVE LET THE STUDENTS COME ALONG, APRIL.
BUT, SENSEI--
WANDA. NOT NOW.
SHE'LL BE OKAY, LEO. DON'T BEAT YOURSELF UP. IT WAS THE FROGS' FAULT.
WANDA, HECTOR, LET'S GO.
I'M SORRY, FATHER.
I THOUGHT I WAS READY. I THOUGHT WE ALL WERE.

SHREDDER.
NO... NOT ANYMORE.
I AM JUST OROKU SAKI.
FINE. WHAT DO YOU WANT, OROKU SAKI?
THERE IS SOMETHING IMPORTANT WE MUST DISCUSS. ALL OF US.
I'LL TELL THE OTHERS.

EPF
EPF
EPF
MY PATIENTS... I'M SO SORRY TO ALL OF YOU...
DR. BARLOW HERE.
MY COMPANIONS, MY FAMILY HOME, MY *RESEARCH*... IT'S ALL GONE.
EPF
THAT'S A SHAME. DID YOU MANAGE TO SAVE *ANYTHING?*
DON-1
SNIFF
YES, MADAME, I DID. A SMALL SAMPLE FROM THE TURTLE CALLED DONATELLO.
DON-1
GOOD. THAT'S ALL WE NEED.
BRING IT BY MY OFFICE IMMEDIATELY AND WE'LL DISCUSS.
PLUS, MY *COLLEAGUE* IS HERE, AND HE'S READY FOR YOU.
I'LL BE THERE SHORTLY.

art by KEVIN EASTMAN
colors by FAHRIZA KAMAPUTRA

art by FERO PE

THE ARMAGEDDON GAME-
OPENING MOVES #1

NEW YORK CITY.
NOW.
HIS NAME IS
OROKU SAKI.
IN THREE LIFETIMES, HE HAS BEEN A NINJA MASTER.
A WARLORD.
A CRIME BOSS.
A DRAGON WARRIOR.
THE SHREDDER.

BUT TODAY, OROKU SAKI IS MERELY A MAN.
A MAN CONTEMPLATING THE CHAOTIC PAST THAT HAS LED HIM TO THIS UNCERTAIN PRESENT.
A MAN DESPERATELY SEEKING ANSWERS FROM BOTH IN ORDER TO FEND OFF A PERILOUS FUTURE.
THERE WAS A TIME--IN A FARAWAY LAND, IN AN AGE LONG FORGOTTEN--WHEN IT WAS HE WHO BROUGHT PERIL TO THE WORLD.
AS JŌNIN TO THE FOOT CLAN, SAKI RULED ALL HE SURVEYED WITH AN IRON FIST.
AN IRON FIST SOAKED WITH THE BLOOD OF ANY WHO DARED STAND IN THE WAY OF HIS MANIACAL QUEST FOR POWER... BEGINNING WITH THE MURDER OF HIS OWN FATHER.
ENEMY AND ALLY ALIKE FELL VICTIM TO HIS WANTON ANNIHILATION.
MEN.
WOMEN.
CHILDREN.
NONE WERE SAFE FROM HIS WRATH.
OROKU SAKI HIMSELF BECAME AN OBJECT OF HIS DESTRUCTION WHEN, IN AN ARCANE RITUAL OF DEATH AND REBIRTH INITIATED BY HIS IMMORTAL WITCH-CONCUBINE KITSUNE...
...HE TOOK HIS OWN LIFE.*
*See Secret History of the Foot Clan--C.B.
PRESERVED IN DEMONIC FLUID UPON HIS DEATH--
--HE WAS HIDDEN AWAY UNTIL THE TIME CAME TO BE REBORN AS KITSUNE'S PROPHESIZED DRAGON WARRIOR...
...TO ONCE AGAIN WREAK HAVOC ON AN UNSUSPECTING WORLD.

IT WAS CENTURIES LATER WHEN REBIRTH BECAME REALITY THROUGH THE DRAGON BLOOD OF OROKU KARAI...
...THE FIRST DESCENDENT OF OROKU SAKI WORTHY ENOUGH TO UNDERTAKE THE PRETERNATURAL DEED.
WITH KARAI AS HIS CHUNIN, AND KITSUNE ONCE AGAIN BY HIS SIDE, OROKU SAKI GREETED THIS SECOND LIFE WITH A NEW NAME--THE SHREDDER.
YET HE RULED THE FOOT CLAN WITH THE SAME IRON FIST AS BEFORE.
BUT AS FATE WOULD HAVE IT, HE WAS NOT THE ONLY ONE TO RETURN TO THIS NEW WORLD.
OLD ENEMIES WERE REBORN, TOO.
HAMATO YOSHI, SAKI'S FORMER CLAN BROTHER, AND YOSHI'S FOUR SONS FOUND SECOND LIVES AS WELL.
ALL EXECUTED BY OROKU SAKI. ALL RETURNED IN MUTATED FORMS TO HAUNT THE SHREDDER'S DARK MISSION TO RULE THE WORLD.
AND DESPITE HIS BEST EFFORTS TO FOIL YOSHI'S MEDDLING IN HIS AFFAIRS, THE SHREDDER WAS EVENTUALLY DEFEATED BY HIS OLD FOE, WHO NOW CALLED HIMSELF SPLINTER.
BUT SEEKING RECONCILIATION, SPLINTER GRACIOUSLY PROVIDED THE SHREDDER WITH WHAT OROKU SAKI HAD REFUSED HAMATO YOSHI ALL THOSE CENTURIES BEFORE...
...AN HONORABLE DEATH.

WITH THIS DEATH, HOWEVER, THERE WAS NO MYSTERY OOZE TO PRESERVE HIM. ONLY HELL AWAITED.
THE SHREDDER HAD BECOME OROKU SAKI ONCE MORE. A CURSED SOUL DOOMED TO BATTLE THE GHOSTS AND DEMONS OF HIS PAST SINS FOR ALL ETERNITY.
OR SO IT WOULD HAVE BEEN...
...IF NOT FOR AN ANCIENT SWORD OF HATE...
...AND A SELFLESS SACRIFICE OF BROTHERLY LOVE...
...WHICH, TOGETHER, MYSTERIOUSLY COMBINED TO RESURRECT HIM, LIKE A PHOENIX FROM THE FIRE, INTO THIS, HIS THIRD LIFE.
AND NOW OFFER HIM THE CHANCE TO REDEEM HIMSELF AT LAST FOR THE ATROCITIES HE INFLICTED IN THE PREVIOUS TWO.
HIS NAME IS OROKU SAKI. AND HE IS JUST A MAN.
A MAN WHO WONDERS IF HE IS READY FOR REDEMPTION.
A MAN WHO FEARS HE IS UNWORTHY.

BEFORE.
AM I READY YET, DO YOU THINK?
DID YOU NOT HEAR ME, KITSUNE?
I HEARD YOU, BELOVED.
BUT YOUR QUERY IS NOT FOR ME TO ANSWER.
YOU HAVE ALREADY REVEALED YOURSELF TO HAMATO YOSHI'S CHILDREN.*
ONLY YOU CAN KNOW IF YOU ARE PREPARED FOR WHAT COMES NEXT.
*Most recently in TMNT #129--C.B.
YES. YOU ARE RIGHT.
AND YOUR PAINTING IS BEAUTIFUL... AS ARE YOU.
AND YOU ARE MY STRONG DRAGON WARRIOR, SAKI.
I'VE NO DOUBTS YOU WILL RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS TO MOVE FORWARD WHEN THEY PRESENT THEMSELVES.
SHE'S RIGHT, YOU KNOW. THERE ARE ALWAYS SIGNS...

...YOU JUST NEED TO KNOW WHERE TO LOOK.
OH, YUMMY! SWEETS!
AKA.
I WAS WONDERING WHEN YOU WOULD RETURN, SISTER.
AKA? BUT I THOUGHT YOU HAD--
HAD *MMF* KILLED ME?
SHE HAD INDEED...

"...BRUTALLY SACRIFICED HER VERY OWN SISTER IN ORDER TO BRING BACK OUR DRAGON DADDY."*
"AND IT PAINED ME TO DO SO..."
*See TMNT: Shredder in Hell #5--C.B.
...TRULY.
PAINED YOU? THAT'S RICH, LITTLE SISTER.
ALMOST AS RICH AS THESE SCRUMPTIOUS CANDIES.
THEN HOW IS IT YOU ARE RETURNED HERE NOW, IN THIS NEW FORM?
IMMORTALS, REMEMBER?
NEW FORM, SAME OLD AKA.
IT IS TRUE. FOR MY SIBLINGS AND ME, DEATH IS NEVER AN ENDING, BUT A BEGINNING OF SORTS--
--REBORN ANEW INTO THE BODIES OF BABES WHILST RETAINING ALL OUR PAST KNOWLEDGE.
WE HAVE ALL HAD TURNS DYING AND RETURNING IN THIS FASHION THROUGHOUT THE AGES.
YES. AND NONE MORE LUDICROUS THAN THE TIME TOAD BARON TOOK UP THAT HEMLOCK DRINKING CONTEST WITH THAT UTTER BORE SOCRATES.
STILL, WHAT A PRECIOUS LITTLE TADPOLE OUR BROTHER MADE UPON HIS RETURN.
BUT I DIGRESS. I HAVEN'T COME HERE TO SPEAK OF THE PAST, BUT RATHER OF THE PRESENT SIGNS YOU HAVE BOTH OVERLOOKED...
...THAT FORETELL OF AN APOCALYPTIC FUTURE.

HM. IT SEEMS I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE MORE YOUTHFUL THESE DAYS.
THIS SECOND CHANCE AT ROMANCE--
--THIRD? FOURTH? WHO CAN KEEP COUNT?--
--SUITS YOU BOTH.
ENOUGH OF YOUR INANE RAMBLING, CHILD.
WHAT IS THIS APOCALYPSE YOU SPEAK OF?
INANE RAMBLING, HE SAYS. WHEN THEIR DYSFUNCTIONAL LOVE IS SO MUCH THE CAUSE FOR WHAT'S TO COME.
GIVE A MORTAL EVEN A TINY TASTE OF COSMIC POWER AND IMPUDENCE IS SURE TO FOLLOW. AND TO CALL ME A CHILD NO LESS--
AKA!
YES, YES... THE APOCALYPSE.
I SUPPOSE I SHOULD EXPLAIN.
IT SEEMS OUR BROTHER, THE RAT KING, HAS BEEN KEEPING QUITE BUSY FOLLOWING YOUR FAILURE TO RESURRECT OUR DRAGON FATHER, KITSUNE.*
SHENANIGANS UPON SHENANIGANS, YOU MIGHT SAY.
HE'S BEEN LURKING IN THE THIN PLACES--AS IS HIS WONT--RECRUITING NEW PAWNS FOR OUR OLD FAMILY GAME...
...WHICH HE FULLY INTENDS TO CONTINUE PLAYING DESPITE A RECENT LACK OF COMPETITIVE INTEREST BY THE REMAINDER OF OUR PANTHEON BRETHREN.
AND HE'S GATHERING FOR HIMSELF A TERRIFYINGLY FORMIDABLE TEAM FOR HIS NEXT PLAY.
*See TMNT #100--C.B.
NEXT PLAY?
HE CALLS IT "THE ARMAGEDDON GAME."
AND IF THAT DOESN'T BEAR APOCALYPTIC UNDERTONES, I DON'T KNOW WHAT DOES.
THIS... TEAM. WHO ARE THEY?
NAMES I'M SURE YOU WILL FIND DISTURBINGLY FAMILIAR...

"THE MEGALOMANIAC CALLED BAXTER STOCKMAN. KRANG, LAST PRINCE OF THE UTROMS. AND THE EVER RESOURCEFUL MADAME NULL...
"...A VERITABLE TRIO OF TERROR AND, UNLIKE OUR SIBLINGS, EXTREMELY MOTIVATED TO TAKE PART IN RAT KING'S LATEST GAMBIT."
I MUST ADMIT, OUR NORMALLY CHAOTIC BROTHER SEEMS TO BE APPROACHING THIS WITH UNCHARACTERISTIC EARNESTNESS...
...WHICH BODES ILL FOR THOSE HE WISHES TO DEFEAT.
AND WHO MIGHT THEY BE?
QUITE SIMPLY... EVERYONE.
THE TROPHY THE RAT KING SEEKS THIS TIME IS THE ENTIRE WORLD.
AND YOU KNOW ALL THIS HOW?
SO SUSPICIOUS, THIS ONE... SO MANY QUESTIONS. MORTAL IMPUDENCE, INDEED.
LET'S JUST SAY, YOU ARE NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO'S BEEN SECRETLY MOVING WITHIN THE SHADOWS OF LATE, DRAGON WARRIOR.
RIGHT. I'VE DONE MY PART TO HELP COUNTER THE RAT KING'S LATEST SCHEME--
--NOW YOU MUST DECIDE IF YOU ARE WILLING TO DO YOURS.
BECAUSE, AS MY SLY LITTLE SISTER WILL CERTAINLY ATTEST, THE ONLY PATH TO VICTORY IN OUR FAMILY'S GAME...

"...IS TO PLAY."
INCORRIGIBLE AS SHE IS, MY SISTER HAS THE RIGHT OF IT.
IN ORDER TO BRING THE RAT KING'S DARK MACHINATIONS INTO THE LIGHT...
...WE MUST TAKE UP HIS CHALLENGE...
...AND MEET HIM ON HIS TERMS.
BY HIS RULES.
WHICH ARE?
THE OLDEST RULES OF ALL, BELOVED.
SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT AN "ARMAGEDDON GAME" IS?
YES. IT'S A CHESS TERM.
A MATCH WITH NO DRAWS.
AND ONE IN WHICH BLACK STARTS AT AN ADVANTAGE AND WHITE IS GIVEN ONLY A LIMITED AMOUNT OF TIME TO TAKE IT AWAY.
I MAY HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RAT KING'S SANITY, BUT I NEVER DOUBT HIS INTELLIGENCE.
HE IS FULLY AWARE OF THE STAKES OF SUCH A GAME AND HAS MADE DANGEROUSLY SHREWD OPENING MOVES AS A RESULT.
AND NOW, AS AKA SAID, IT FALLS TO US TO COUNTER THOSE MOVES. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE.
PLEASE. LIE DOWN NOW.
AND WHAT COUNTERMOVE DO YOU PROPOSE?
A JOURNEY. INTO THE PAST.
INTO MEMORIES.
MEMORIES?
YES.
YOU WILL RECALL, A SIMILAR STRATEGY WAS USED SUCCESSFULLY AGAINST YOU ONCE.

"WHEN HAMATO YOSHI CHALLENGED YOU TO THE *GAUNTLET* RITUAL, HE ALLOWED HIS SONS TO DIVERT YOU IN BATTLE WHILE HE SEARCHED HIS MEMORIES FOR CLUES TO DEFEAT YOU.*
"FOR *PAST WEAKNESSES* HE COULD EXPLOIT.
"A SOUND TACTIC THAT ULTIMATELY COST YOU YOUR CLAN..."
*See TMNT #50--C.B.
...AND YOUR *LIFE*.
AND NOW? DO YOU BELIEVE THERE ARE ANSWERS TO STOP THE RAT KING IN *MY* MEMORIES?
NO. NOT YOURS.
THE INFORMATION WE SEEK IS HIDDEN WITHIN MY BROTHER'S *WICKED PAWNS*.
FEARS AND FAILURES WE MUST DISCOVER IF WE ARE TO HAVE ANY HOPE OF BRINGING ORDER...
GRRNNNG...
...TO THE *CHAOS* TO COME!
RAHH!
WHA-- HOW?
SO, TELL ME, BELOVED...
...ARE YOU *READY* TO BEGIN?
"HURRY, *DAMN* YOU..."

...IT'S BEEN A WEEK SINCE YOU'VE EATEN!
"CAN THEY SEE US?"
"NO."
NOR HEAR US.
SINCE WE'VE EATEN.

THAT'S IT... THAT'S IT!
DIG, YOU OBSTINATE FOOL. DIG!
I HAD HEARD GENERAL KRANG NOW POSSESSED THE SHELL OF THIS CREATURE, BUT TO SEE IT WITH MY OWN EYES...
YES. PATHETIC.
THOUGH POSSESSION MAY BE AN EXAGGERATION OF THE SITUATION--
YES! YES!
SWALLOW IT! QUICKLY!
--AS THIS MUTANT YET CLINGS TO ITS FEW REMAINING THREADS OF FREE WILL.
GRAH!
NO!
STILL?! STILL WITH YOUR DAMNED HUNGER STRIKE!
WHY?!
AND IT APPEARS IT IS FREELY STARVING ITSELF TO ELIMINATE THE PARASITE WITHIN.
PERHAPS KRANG IS NO LONGER THE THREAT YOUR SISTER INDICATED.
AS I TOLD YOU BEFORE, DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE RAT KING'S ACUMEN.
DESPITE KRANG'S UNCOOPERATIVE HOST, MY BROTHER CHOSE THE GENERAL FOR A REASON.
WHY...
NOW, WE TRULY BEGIN OUR JOURNEY, INTO THE MOST PRIMAL PART OF THIS ONE'S BRAIN, WHERE FEAR RESIDES.
THE AMYGDALA.
RECONNAISSANCE, THEN?
JUST SO.

THE PLANET BALARAPHON OF DIMENSION X.
YEARS AGO.
WHAT THE HELL'S HE DOING?!
THIS IS A NEUTRAL PLANET!
DOESN'T KRANG KNOW HOW MANY FREAKING TREATIES HE'S BREAKING RIGHT NOW?!
HE KNOWS, ZAK...
...BUT HE'S OBVIOUSLY NOT TOO WORRIED ABOUT IT!
YOU JUST WORRY ABOUT GETTING THE SHIELDS UP BEFORE HE BREAKS OUR SHIP, TOO!
ROGER THAT, COMMANDER DASK...
...WORKING ON IT.
GO TO BALARAPHON, THEY SAID. GET A LITTLE R&R. FORGET THE WAR FOR A WHILE.
BEEP
OKAY...
...SHIELDS UP!

"CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHAT THAT PSYCHOPATH HAS PLANNED NEXT."
THEY'VE RAISED THEIR SHIELDS, GENERAL KRANG...
...WHAT ARE YOUR ORDERS, SIR?
CEASE FIRE, CAPTAIN HAMBRATH.
SHIELDS OR NO, I DON'T WANT THEM PULVERIZED.
THE LEVERAGE TAKING ZENTER'S PRECIOUS ROYAL GUARD PRISONER WILL PROVIDE ME IS WORTH A HANDS-ON APPROACH, DON'T YOU THINK?
COLONEL CH'RELL, GET YOUR TROOPS TO THE SURFACE...
...AND BRING ME THOSE REBELS.
AS YOU COMMAND, GENERAL.
"WE'VE GOT INCOMING, SIR..."

...THINGS ARE ABOUT TO GET UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL.
NO KIDDING, KALA.
ZAK, GET ON THE HORN AND SEND OUT A GENERAL DISTRESS SIGNAL...
...WE NEED ANY HELP WE CAN GET!
ALL COALITION ASSETS, THIS IS NEUTRINO VESSEL RESISTANCE ONE ON PLANET BALARAPHON!
MAYDAY! MAYDAY!
WE ARE UNDER ILLEGAL ATTACK BY UTROM EMPIRE FORCES AND ALL AVENUES OF RETREAT ARE BLOCKED!
REQUESTING ANY COALITION REINFORCEMENTS IN THIS QUADRANT!
SAY AGAIN... MAYDAY!
"GREAT. JUST WHAT WE NEEDED..."

...KRANG'S FAVORITE LAPDOG.
CH'RELL.
"TALK ABOUT A PSYCHO."
LIEUTENANT KLEVE, IS THE SLAVE READY WITH THE SHIELD NULLIFIER?
YES, SIR.
THEN WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?
YOU HEARD THE COLONEL!
"TAKE OUT THAT SHIELD!"
GRAAAAH!
DAMN UTROMS! ALWAYS SENDING OTHERS TO DO THEIR DIRTY WORK.
YEAH. BUT IT'S HIM OR US.
ZAK! DEACTIVATE THE FLANK SHIELD!
FZAK
YAAGH!

FLANK SHIELD BACK ONLINE.
NICE SHOOTING, SIR.
NOT THAT IT MATTERS. YOU BETTER GET BACK HERE, ZAK...
"...SOMETHING TELLS ME THIS PARTY'S JUST GETTING STARTED."
I'M STILL SEEING AN ACTIVE SHIELD BUBBLE ON THAT BLASTED NEUTRINO SHIP...
...ARE YOU HAVING DIFFICULTIES SUBDUING OUR PREY, COLONEL?
NOTHING A LITTLE MORE FODDER TO THE FLAME CAN'T RESOLVE, GENERAL.
KLEVE?
SIR?
"SEND THE REST OF THE SLAVES."
"CRAP!"
WE'RE GONNA GET MOWED DOWN IF WE OPEN THE SHIELD TO FIGHT THOSE GUYS. BUT IF WE DON'T--
THEY'RE GONNA NULLIFY THE SHIELD. I HEAR YOU, KALA.
ZAK! BELAY MY LAST ORDER!
GET THIS THING OFF THE GROUND!
BUT I GOTTA TAKE DOWN THE SHIELD TO DO THAT, SIR.
SHIELD'S HISTORY EITHER WAY...

"...AT LEAST THIS WAY WE'VE GOT A FIGHTING CHANCE!"
FOOM
"SO. THE NEUTRINO COWARDS WISH TO RETREAT, HM?"
WISH DENIED.
CHKOW
AAAH!
KALA!
BADOOM
NNNGG...
GET US BACK DOWN THERE, ZAK!
WE'RE NOT LEAVING KALA BEHIND!
UH, COMMANDER...

"...LOOKS LIKE OUR *MAYDAY* GOT THROUGH."
SHOOOOM
RESISTANCE ONE, THIS IS ***COMMANDER LUNA AZUL*** OF THE IMPERIAL AERWYL STARFLEET, NOVA SQUADRON DIVISION...
...HOW CAN WE BE OF SERVICE?
PERFECT TIMING, COMMANDER! WE'VE GOT A ***DAMAGED VESSEL*** AND A ***MAN DOWN***--
--MY ***PILOT*** CAN HANDLE THE SHIP...

...BUT I SURE COULD USE SOME HELP ON THE GROUND.
COPY THAT.
ALL RIGHT, ZEBULON, BRING US IN LOW.
RAVE, GROTTO, EXEEN... GO GET THAT SOLDIER!
WE GO. WE WIN.
CONSIDER HER GOT, COMMANDER!
"NO! NOT THEM!"
NOT THE NOVA SQUADRON!
S-SIR... THE NEUTRINO SHIP'S SHIELD IS DOWN. WE CAN--
WE CAN DO NOTHING, YOU FOOL!
THE COALITION WOULD NEVER SEND ITS MOST PRIZED ASSET INTO BATTLE WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT REINFORCEMENTS TO FOLLOW!
INITIATE TELEPORTATION PROTOCOLS, CAPTAIN.
I WANT CH'RELL AND MY UTROMS BACK ON THIS SHIP IMMEDIATELY.
WE'RE LEAVING!
AND THE... THE TRICERATONS, SIR?
FORGET THEM...

"... THERE'S PLENTY MORE WHERE THEY CAME FROM."
RAVE, TAKE NEUTRINO.
GROTTO, BRING FIGHT.
YOU MISS!
FZAK
HRGK!
SHLIPP
I DON'T!
SO, THE COALITION SENDS ITS FAVORITE LACKEYS TO INTERFERE.
GOOD.
DESTROY THEM!

RAVE, WE'VE GOT OUR EYES ON THE *UTROM COMMAND SHIP.*
HOW ARE THINGS LOOKING DOWN *THERE?*
BETTER. NOT GOOD.
I'VE GOT THE WOUNDED NEUTRINO...
"...BUT EXEEN AND GROTTO HAVE THEIR HANDS *FULL* WITH COLONEL CH'RELL'S MINIONS."
CH'RELL?
THEN WE KNOW *WHO'S* HIDING IN THAT COMMAND SHIP, DON'T WE?
GOT A PRETTY GOOD IDEA, YEAH.
GO HELP THE OTHERS HOLD OFF CH'RELL, RAVE.
WE'VE GOT *LOTS* OF COALITION HELP ON THE WAY SOON. MEANTIME...
...TRIP?
MA'AM?
LOCK *ALL* WEAPONS ON THAT COMMAND SHIP...

"...LET'S GIVE GENERAL KRANG A LITTLE GREETING-- NOVA SQUADRON STYLE."
SIR! THE COALITION SHIP IS PREPARING TO ENGAGE US!
I KNEW IT! THAT BLASTED AZUL IS TRYING TO DRAW US INTO A PETTY BRAWL...
...WHILE SHE WAITS FOR THE BIG GUNS TO ARRIVE.
WELL, IT APPEARS THE NEUTRINOS HAVE DECIDED TO STAY AND FIGHT AFTER ALL. WHICH MEANS...
CHKOWW
"...THEY NO LONGER NEED THEIR SHIP."
BWOOM
GET DOWN!
I SWEAR... I'M GONNA KILL THAT BASTARD.
YOU'RE WELCOME TO TRY.
CH'RELL, THIS IS KRANG...
...PREPARE TO WITHDRAW.
WITHDRAW?!
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, GENERAL?
I'M SAYING WE'RE ABORTING THIS MISSION AND GETTING OUT OF HERE, COLONEL.
BUT, SIR... WE HAVE THE ADVANTAGE. JUST A LITTLE MORE TIME AND--
WE'VE LOST THE ADVANTAGE AND WE HAVE NO MORE DAMNED TIME!
BRING THEM BACK NOW, CAPTAIN!
Y-YES, SIR!
NO.
NO!
UTROMS FLEE.
THANKS TO YOU GUYS.
YEAH. WE OWE YOU ONE. BIG-TIME.
LIKE I SAY...
...WE COME. WE WIN.

FOOM
GOOD. THEY'RE BACK.
GET US AWAY FROM HERE, CAPTAIN. NOW.
WHY?!
WHY DID YOU PULL US OFF THE BATTLEGROUND, GENERAL?
WHY ARE WE LEAVING?
I SENSE DISPLEASURE IN YOUR TONE, CH'RELL.
DISPLEASURE? IS THAT WHAT YOU SENSE?
WE HAD THE NEUTRINO SCUM BEATEN. THE NOVA INTERLOPERS, TOO.
VICTORY WAS IN MY GRASP, AND INSTEAD YOU...
...YOU RUN?!
I BEG TO DIFFER, COLONEL. WHAT YOU CALL RUNNING, I CONSIDER A STRATEGIC WITHDRAWAL.
WE ARE ALREADY PICKING UP INCOMING COALITION REINFORCEMENTS ON OUR SENSORS.
YOUR SO-CALLED IMMINENT VICTORY...
...WAS MERELY IMPENDING DOOM, YOU INSOLENT FOOL!
REGARDLESS.
CONSIDER YOUR DISPLEASURE...

"...DULY NOTED."
THAT WAS... ENLIGHTENING.
AND HELPFUL AS WELL, BELOVED?
POTENTIALLY. IT APPEARS, FOR ALL HIS BULLISH BLUSTER, THE GOOD GENERAL IS FEARFUL OF THE COALITION FORMED AGAINST HIM IN HIS OWN DIMENSION.
IN PARTICULAR, THE ONES CALLING THEMSELVES THE NOVA SQUADRON.
LOCATING AND RECRUITING THAT GROUP TO OUR SIDE COULD BE BENEFICIAL.
BUT NOT EASY.
NO. NOT EASY.
BUT NOT IMPOSSIBLE.
AND WE MUST ALSO CAREFULLY CONSIDER COLONEL CH'RELL.
I SENSE A POTENTIAL RIFT BETWEEN HIM AND THE GENERAL THAT MIGHT BE EXPLOITED, GIVEN THE PROPER... ENCOURAGEMENT.
INDEED.
SO HUNGRY...
FOR NOW, WE MUST LEAVE THE GENERAL BEHIND.
OUR JOURNEY CONTINUES...

...AND MAYOR BAXTER STOCKMAN AWAITS.

art by KEVIN EASTMAN
colors by FAHRIZA KAMAPUTRA

THE ARMAGEDDON GAME-
OPENING MOVES #2

art by FERO PE

STOCKMAN MAYORAL OFFICE. NEW YORK CITY.
NOW.
"THIS ONE APPEARS AGITATED, BELOVED."
MS. FLOOD?
"DOES HE?"
ZARA!
"HE APPEARS TO ME TO BE SCHEMING, BUT THEN AGAIN..."
DAMMIT, WOMAN...
...MUST I DO EVERYTHING MYSELF?
...I WOULD EXPECT NO LESS FROM BAXTER STOCKMAN.

YOU CALLED, DR. STOCKMAN?
MORE THAN ONCE.
MORE THAN I EXPECT TO. AND MUST I REMIND YOU THAT AT ALL TIMES IN THIS BUILDING, I AM TO BE ADDRESSED AS MR. MAYOR?
SORRY, DOC-- ER, MR. MAYOR. I JUST--
NOT IMPORTANT.
THIS, HOWEVER, IS.
I WANT THE NAME OF THE PRIVATE PARAMILITARY COMPANY THAT IMBECILE AGENT BISHOP HAD UNDER CONTRACT FOR THE E.P.F.
THEIR CONTACT INFORMATION AS WELL.
YES, SIR.
I'LL GET THAT INFO TO YOU ASAP.
YES...
...SEE THAT YOU DO.
"PERHAPS YOU ARE CORRECT, KITSUNE..."

...HE DOES APPEAR TO BE RATHER ANXIOUS.
YES, WELL... MY FAMILY'S GAME TENDS TO EVOKE THAT PARTICULAR RESPONSE IN MANY OF THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO PLAY.
ESPECIALLY WHEN THE RAT KING IS THE ONE PROVIDING THE RULES.
SHALL WE DIG DEEPER?
OF COURSE, SAKI. IT IS WHY WE ARE HERE, AFTER ALL.
TO JOURNEY INSIDE HIS MIND...

"...AND INTO THE *PAST*."
TCRI. NEW YORK CITY.
MONTHS AGO.
TCRI
"INCUBATION CONTINUES AT A SATISFACTORY PACE..."
...ALL SPECIMENS REMAIN INTACT AND VIABLE. ESTIMATE FOR DELIVERY IN THREE WEEKS.
IS THAT ALL, DR. STOCKMAN?
FOR NOW. GET THE PERTINENT DATA TO *NULL* AND THEN FEEL FREE TO LEAVE FOR THE WEEKEND, MS. FLOOD.
UM, ACTUALLY, SIR...NEXT WEEK STARTS MY VACATION. I'M OUT UNTIL AFTER THE FIRST OF THE YEAR.
OUT?
YES. YOU... YOU *APPROVED* MY REQUEST, REMEMBER?
OH, *UH*... YES...OF COURSE. I REMEMBER. YOUR HOLIDAY REQUEST.
SEEMS A SILLY WASTE OF TIME TO ME, CONSIDERING THE AMOUNT OF WORK *YET* TO BE DONE, BUT VERY WELL.
AND YOU, SIR? ANY PLANS FOR THE HOLIDAYS?
OTHER THAN A FEW ANNOYING MAYORAL DUTIES AND WORKING DILIGENTLY TO KEEP THIS COMPANY PROFITABLE? NO. NONE.
SAME AS ANY *OTHER* YEAR.
USE YOUR TIME OFF WISELY, MS. FLOOD.
I FULLY EXPECT YOU TO BE PREPARED TO RECOMMENCE WITH ALL YOUR DUTIES *IMMEDIATELY* UPON YOUR RETURN.
YES, DOCTOR.

DAMNED PEOPLE AND THEIR SENSELESS HOLIDAYS.
OFF GALIVANTING WHILE THE REST OF US STAY BUSY KEEPING THE WORLD TURNING...
...ALL BY OURSELVES.
POOR BABY...
...ALL ALONE FOR CHRISTMAS, ARE YA?
YOU?!

JOIN THE CLUB.
SPEAKIN' OF ALONE, THOUGHT YOUR SECRETARY WAS NEVER GONNA LEAVE.
ME AND YOU GOT SOME PERSONAL BUSINESS TO SETTLE...
...AND THREE'S A CROWD.

WHAT'S WRONG, BAXTER?
CAT GOT YOUR TONGUE?
WELL, NOT *YET.*
I SUPPOSE THAT'S MEANT TO FRIGHTEN ME?
NAH. IT'S MEANT TO CUT YOU TO RIBBONS.
CRUDE FOOL. BRINGING A KNIFE...
...TO A *GUN FIGHT.*
NOW TELL ME, HOW DID YOU GET PAST MY SECURITY?
WOW. YOU *ARE* GETTIN' FORGETFUL, AIN'T YA?
FIRST YOUR SECRETARY'S VACATION, AND NOW ME.

I USED TO BE YOUR FAVORITE GUINEA PIG, REMEMBER? SPENT A LOT OF QUALITY TIME IN YOUR STOCKGEN LABS BACK IN THE DAY, GETTIN' THE LAY OF THE LAND.
THIS PLACE AIN'T MUCH DIFFERENT. NEW BUILDING, SAME OL' TORTURE CHAMBER.
FZZK
SAME OL' TRICKS.
AND IF ANYONE'S LEARNED ALL YOUR SNEAKY TRICKS THE HARD WAY...
...IT'S LITTLE OL' ME.

YOU KNOW *NOTHING,* IMBECILIC MUTANT!
FZZK FZZK
I KNOW YOU MISSED.
OH...
FZZK
...*NO!*
GRAHH!
UNFF!
WHOMP
AND I KNOW THE NEXT PART'S GONNA *HURT* YOU.
A LOT.
HEH.
IS THAT SO?
WELL, BEFORE YOU START, LET ME TELL YOU WHAT *I* KNOW, MR. HOB.

I KNOW YOU'RE ALONE NOW.
A *PARIAH.*
"PURSUED...
"...BEATEN...
"...IMPRISONED..."
...AND EXILED BY YOUR FELLOW MUTANTS. TOSSED ONTO THE STREET LIKE THE *DIRTY TRASH* YOU ARE.*
WHAT'S THE MATTER, MR. HOB...
*See TMNT #121–122--C.B.
...CAT GOT YOUR TONGUE?

SHWMP
SHUT UP!
SHUT UP!
GNFF!
HOW PREDICTABLY...
...PATHETIC.
I AIN'T THE ONE ON MY KNEES.
NO. NOT THIS TIME...
...BUT AT LEAST MY OWN KIND DIDN'T PUT ME HERE.
YOU... YOU'RE DEAD.
PERHAPS. BUT WHETHER YOU KILL ME OR NOT, A FAR WORSE FATE IS WAITING FOR YOU AND YOUR ILK...
...EVERY LAST ONE OF YOU.

NO.
NOT LIKE THIS.
YOU'RE RIGHT. I AM ALONE.
EVERYTHING I'VE BUILT'S BEEN TORN AWAY... BIT BY STINKIN' BIT.
AND NOW I'M GONNA MAKE SURE THE SAME DAMN THING HAPPENS TO YOU.
ONLY WORSE.
I'M GONNA BRING IT ALL CRASHING DOWN ON YOUR HEAD, STOCKMAN.
YOUR BUSINESSES, YOUR POLITICS, YOUR WALL, YOUR REPUTATION...
...YOUR MONSTERS!
FZZK FZZK FZZK

BY THE TIME I'M DONE, YOU'RE GONNA WISH LIKE HELL I KILLED YOU TODAY.
HAPPY HOLIDAYS...
...MR. MAYOR.
"THAT WAS A BIT OF A SURPRISE..."
...THE MUTANT CAT SEEMS TO HAVE AN UNNERVING EFFECT ON STOCKMAN.
NOT SOMETHING EASILY COME BY, SPEAKING FROM MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH THE SCIENTIST.
YES, OLD HOB COULD CERTAINLY BE AN ASSET.
BUT THERE IS AN ENMITY BETWEEN HIM AND THE OTHER MUTANTS THAT MAY PROVE DIFFICULT TO OVERCOME.
LEAVE THAT TO ME.
MR. MAYOR, I HAVE THE INFORMATION YOU REQUESTED.
PROCEED.
THE PARAMILITARY GROUP'S NAME IS DARKWATER. WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO SET UP A MEETING WITH THEM, SIR?
YES, MS. FLOOD...
...I WOULD LIKE THAT VERY MUCH INDEED.

SO...OUR FINAL DESTINATION?
YES.
I MUST ADMIT, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT THIS TIME, KITSUNE.
MY PAST EXPERIENCES WITH GENERAL KRANG AND STOCKMAN SOFTENED ANY SURPRISES THEIR MEMORIES CONTAINED...
...BUT MADAME NULL REMAINS A MYSTERY TO ME.
NULL
TO ME AS WELL, BELOVED...

"...WHICH MAKES HER ALL THE MORE DANGEROUS."
ALL IS IN ORDER, THEN, ZODI?
YES, MA'AM. THE CONSTRUCTION CREWS HAVE LEFT FOR THE NIGHT, AND ALL GUARDS POSTED HAVE REPORTED THEIR FLOORS CLEARED AND SECURE.
GOOD.
NOW LEAVE ME. GET SOME REST. BOTH OF YOU.
WE ARE ABOUT TO GET MUCH BUSIER VERY SOON.
YES, MA'AM.
GOOD NIGHT, MADAME NULL.
I ADVISE EXTREME CAUTION WITH THIS ONE, SAKI.
IN MY BROTHER'S TWISTED GAME...
...SHE IS THE WILD CARD.

PLANET HIROBYL. DIMENSION Z.
YEARS AGO.
"WHERE IS SHE?"
HOW COULD YOU HAVE ALLOWED HER TO ESCAPE?
WITH THE TURNSTONE, NO LESS!
MY APOLOGIES AGAIN, COUSIN NULL...

...THOSE RESPONSIBLE WILL BE PUNISHED SEVERELY ONCE WE'VE RECOVERED OUR PREY.
IF WE RECOVER HER, DON'T YOU MEAN, NOI TAI DAR?
WE'VE COMBED THIS ENTIRE SECTOR AND NOTHING.
IT'S AS IF SHE'S DISAPPEARED INTO THIN AIR!
IMPOSSIBLE! WE WOULD HAVE DETECTED THE RESIDUAL TELEPORTATION ENERGIES HAD SHE GONE THAT ROUTE.
NO. SHE IS HERE. WE WILL FIND HER...AND THE STONE.
I PROMISE.
PROMISES MAKE FOR POOR PROFITS, COUSIN...
...UNLIKE ACTION.
WITH THAT IN MIND, WE HAVE SOME VERY AFFLUENT CLIENTS IN DIMENSION X WHO ARE EXTREMELY INTERESTED IN OUR LATEST EXPERIMENT...

...SEEMS LIKE A GOOD TIME FOR A BIT OF *PROOF OF CONCEPT*, HM?
AGREED, COUSIN.
RELEASE **VERMINATOR 2!**
THAT'S IT, BEAST. *PROVE* YOUR WORTHINESS!
FIND THAT THRICE-DAMNED WITCH...
GRRAARR!

"...FIND CHERUBAE!"
PLEASE RETURN TO ME NOW. THIS WAS ALL A TRAP.
THE RESCUE HAS FAILED, AND I'M TOO WOUNDED TO FLEE.
HUNTER HAS BECOME HUNTED.
"PLEASE HURR..."
...I'M RUNNING OUT OF TIME.

"GOOD NEWS, COUSIN...
SNIFF SNIFF
...THE BEAST HAS LOCKED ON TO A SCENT.
LET'S HOPE, FOR ALL OUR SAKES, IT'S THE CORRECT ONE.
FOLLOW THAT CREATURE...
"...TIME TO FIND OUT IF THE SUBSTANTIAL INVESTMENT INTO ITS CREATION WAS WORTH IT."

SNIFF SNIFF
GRROAAR!
"THERE, YOU SEE, COUSIN..."
...VERMINATOR Z HAS HER.
"THE GIRL'S AS GOOD AS OURS."
GRAAH!
KRRCH
"SHE WON'T SLIP AWAY AGAIN."
HMF?

NO!
FZAK
YIP!
YOU WILL NOT TAKE ME!
FZAK
AND YOU WILL NOT HAVE THE TURNSTONE.
YOU WERE SAYING, COUSIN?
HRNN...
HRAHH!

"PERSISTENT, I'LL GIVE HIM THAT..."
--FOLLOW THAT STUBBORN FOOL!
GET UP, YOU WORTHLESS MAGGOT!
GRN?
"HUNT'S NOT OVER!"
CAN'T STOP, BUT... TOO TIRED.
TOO...
...HURT.
WHOMP
"THERE!"

SHE'S DOWN! WE HAVE HER!
GRAAAR!
MOVE TO SURROUND HER, NOI TAI DAR!
GRA
NO.
BACK...
BACK!
YIPE!
FZAK
"AND CONTROL THAT IDIOTIC BEAST"
WE WANT THE WITCH CAPTURED...
"...NOT SLAUGHTERED."
STAY... BACK.

WHPZXZ
STAND DOWN!
I ALREADY TOLD YOU...
SHUMP
NO!
...WE HAVE HER.
GOOD COUSIN NOI TAI DAR IS RIGHT, GIRL...

...WE HAVE YOU, AS WE HAVE YOUR BRETHREN, THE FOUR WINDS.
I COMMEND YOUR EFFORT TODAY. DESPITE THE TRAP WE LAID, YOU VERY NEARLY FREED THEM FROM THEIR CAGES.
BUT NOW WE HAVE YOU IN YOUR OWN CAGE, AND THIS WILL ALL GO SO MUCH EASIER FOR YOU... AND YOUR COMRADES... IF YOU CEASE BEING SO OBSTINATE AND RETURN QUIETLY WITH US TO THE PRISON.
UNDERSTAND. YOU AND YOUR TURNSTONE WILL SERVE ME...ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.
I BEG TO DIFFER, MADAME NULL. YOU HAVE NEITHER CHERUBAE NOR THE STONE...
NO.
GRRRRR
...THEY'RE BOTH COMING WITH ME.
THANK THE CREATOR. YOU HEARD MY CALL.
YEP. GOT DELAYED A BIT BETWEEN DIMENSIONS. SORRY.

NO APOLOGIES NECESSARY.
FZZAK
WE JUST NEED TO GO. NOW.
BUT I SWEAR...
...I WILL RETURN FOR THE OTHERS.
OH, STOP, YOU USELESS THING...
ZZAP
YIP!
...THEY'RE ALREADY LONG GONE.
NO! TAI DAR?
Y-YES, COUSIN?
AS SOON AS YOU'RE DONE CLEANING UP THAT FAILED PROTOTYPE, I WANT YOU TO RETURN TO THE PRISON AND ENSURE OUR OTHER "GUESTS" ARE SECURE.
THEY NEED NOT BE COMFORTABLE BUT KILLING THEM IS OUT OF THE QUESTION. FOR THE TURNSTONE TO BE OF ANY USE TO ANYONE, ALL FOUR OF THEM MUST REMAIN ALIVE.
CHERUBAE KNOWS THIS. SHE'LL RETURN FOR THE OTHERS SO WE BETTER BE PREPARED, LEST THAT GIRL AND HER TURNSTONE BE THE DESTRUCTION OF US ALL.
SEE TO IT, COUSIN...

"...I HAVE IMPORTANT BUSINESS *ELSEWHERE.*"
FOUR WINDS... TURNSTONES... WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?
IT APPEARS THE *ANSWERS* LIE WITH THE ONE CALLED CHERUBAE.
NOW...
From: B_Stock_Doc@securedmail.com
To: Null_Mad_Z@securedmail.com
Subj: Phase One/Game
N --
SOTC is a go from my end. Have you assets ready
-- BS
"...WE MUST *RETURN* HOME."
DESPITE THE THINGS WE HAVE SEEN, IT FEELS AS THOUGH I HAVE MORE *QUESTIONS* THAN WHEN WE STARTED, KITSUNE.
EVEN SO, YOU *KNOW* WHAT YOU MUST DO WITH THIS NEW INFORMATION, AS WELL AS *WHO* YOU MUST GATHER TOGETHER TO HELP YOU *EXPLOIT* IT.
AND YOU MUST DO SO *WITHOUT* ME, BELOVED.
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, KITSUNE?
TAKE THIS. IT IS THE BEST I CAN OFFER AS HELP AGAINST MY BROTHER... FOR *NOW.*
AFTER EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED WITH THE DRAGON BEFORE, AND THE MAGIC TODAY... THE STRAIN OF IT ALL... IT IS *TOO MUCH* TO BEAR.
IN A MOMENT, I WILL PASS INTO THE *THIN PLACES.* I NEED TIME... TO REST... TO RECUPERATE...
KITSUNE?
"...ALONE."
KITSUNE!

HIS NAME IS OROKU SAKI.
AND HE IS JUST A MAN.
A MAN WHO WONDERS IF HE IS READY FOR REDEMPTION.
A MAN WHO FEARS HE IS UNWORTHY.
A MAN WHO HAS BEEN SEARCHING FOR A SIGN.
A MAN...
...WHO IS THROUGH WAITING.

EPILOGUE.
I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND MY SAYING, BUT YOU LOOK ABSOLUTELY AWFUL. AND YOU SMELL EVEN WORSE.
LIKE WARMED-OVER DEATH WITH A HINT OF...
SNIFF SNIFF
...KITSUNE?
SO, LITTLE SISTER...NOT QUITE FINISHED WITH THE GAME AFTER ALL, HM?
COME NOW, BEASTIES. WE CAN'T HAVE YOU IN SUCH A SORRY STATE.
IT APPEARS WE HAVE MORE DETERMINED COMPETITION THAN I WAS EXPECTING.
CHOMP
THAT'S IT... EAT UP.
DON'T BE SHY.
OHHH... GOOD...
GULP
PLENTY MORE WHERE THAT CAME FROM.

art by KEVIN EASTMAN
colors by FAHRIZA KAMAPUTRA

art by JUNI BA

2022 ANNUAL

I DIDN'T WANT TO GO ON THIS MISSION TONIGHT.
I'VE HAD THIS THING IN THE PIT OF MY STOMACH SINCE I PROPOSED DOING THIS.
MEDITATION MAKES IT WORSE.
I THOUGHT IT'D BE GOOD TO DO THIS THOUGH...
FOR THEM.
FEELS SO GOOD, WEARING OLD GEAR AGAIN!
IT'S LIKE NOTHING'S CHANGED!
SOME THINGS HAVE.
THINGS HAVE GOTTEN AWKWARD RECENTLY.
OOMF
MIKEY!
BOOM

OLD HABITS LOST.
HUM... SORRY, DUDE, GUESS I WASN'T LOOKING?
MOOD IS TENSE.
JUST FOCUS ON YOUR TASK, MIKEY.
GNN... FOCUS ON YA TASK...GNA GNA...
TAC
GNIII
THE LIBRAIRIE
THINGS HAVE CHANGED SO MUCH, IT'S DAUNTING.
SO I CLING TO FATHER'S OLD TRICKS.
FIUU
"STRIKE HARD."

WOMPF
?
"FADE INTO THE NIGHT."
WHAT HE DIDN'T TELL US WAS, ONCE IN THE DARK, YOUR THOUGHTS START SPIRALING.
YOU FEEL ALONE.
MAYBE THAT'S JUST THE NORMAL COURSE OF LIFE.
WITH ONE LOGICAL END POINT.
THOMAS CROFT MARINE
SIMON
HEH. IRONIC.

BUT I CAN'T TELL THEM THAT.
THE LEADER IS THE PILLAR THE OTHERS LEAN ON.
BELOVED FATHER
SOLDIER
BESIDES, THEY NEED THIS. REGARDLESS OF MY FEARS.
SO WE'RE DOING THIS. FOR THEM.
BUT DAMN.
WHY DID IT HAVE TO LOOK SO CREEPY?
NO. YOU'RE MAKING EXCUSES AGAIN, LEO.

THE FLIP-FLOPPING HAS TO STOP. STICK TO YOUR DECISION.
COME ON.
SWIP
JUMP.
OH.
ON SECOND THOUGHT...
...WE COULD JUST GO BACK. WE DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS. MAYBE THEY CHANGED THEIR MINDS.
MAYBE THEY DON'T WANT TO BE HERE EITHER.
WE DOIN' IT, OR WHAT?
...FINE. FOR THEM.

I CAN'T TELL THEM THE PAIN IN MY STOMACH IS GETTING WORSE THE CLOSER WE GET TO OUR DESTINATION.
IF I DO, I'M AFRAID THEY'LL DRIFT AWAY.
MAYBE THEY ALREADY HAVE.
THINGS HAVEN'T BEEN THE SAME SINCE MUTANT TOWN.
SINCE
?

WHAT THE SHELL?
STAY TOGETHER!
IT'S GETTING THICKER!
YOUR FEAR... YOUR GRIEF... YOUR PAIN...

MY FEAST!

WE JUMP HEADFIRST.
WOOSH
VOOF
SWSSSH
SLASH
A MISTAKE.
ROAR
FOOLISH!
TCHAK
BOM
TCHING
WHOA!

I CAN FEEL IT.
THE RHYTHM IS OFF.
SCRCH
SCRCH
SWOOSH
HEY!
BOOM
DUM
DUM
DUM
WOOSH

THE FEAR... CAN SMELL IT...
TASTE IT.
SLASH
OKAY, LET'S TRY AGAIN.

DASH DASH DASH DASH
SHTACK!
KRSHH..
CLING
PAK!
BOOM
FIUU
SHTK
POF
KRCH
I CAN FEEL THEM LOSING GROUND.
BROOF

I HAVE TO PROTECT THEM. BE THE LEADER.
YOU AND ME NOW, REEK-FACE.
PAW PAW PAW PAW PAW
HE'S A BRUTE. STRIKE STRATEGICALLY.
BIM
VOOSH
SWISH
BREAK A RIB.
AND HE'LL FLINCH.
HE'S NOT FLINCHING.
CRASH
LEO!

HE'S WAKING UP!
HEY, MAN, YOU OKAY?
AFTER THAT BEATING, HE'LL BE LUCKY IF HE AIN'T SEEIN' SIX OF US!
DON'T MOVE YET. YOU MIGHT HAVE A BROKEN RIB.
OOOOF... SOMEONE REMIND ME THE POINT OF HAVING A SHELL...
WHAT HAPPENED?
YOU PLAYED HERO AGAIN, LEO, IS WHAT HAPPENED!

YOU GOT KNOCKED OUT GOOD! WE HAD TO GET YOU OUT.
GNN... WHERE'S THE BAG?
STILL BACK THERE...
WHAT EVEN WAS THAT THING, DUDE?
A LEECH SPIRIT.

I SAW IT WHEN HE GRABBED ME.
HE'S A SPIRIT WHO HAUNTS CEMETERIES AND TRACKS THE GRIEF AND DESPAIR OF THOSE WHO LOST SOMEONE TO WAR.
HE SNEAKS UP ON THEM AND DEVOURS THEIR LIFE FORCE. HE'S DONE THAT THROUGHOUT HISTORY UNTIL HE GOT HERE.
THE MUTAGEN BOMB MUST HAVE AFFECTED ONE OF THE SLUGS THAT FOLLOW HIM, AND HE POSSESSED IT.
IF WE SIMPLY GO, HE MIGHT GIVE UP AND LEAVE US ALONE.
BUT WHY ATTACK US IN THE FIRST PLACE?
IT'S PRETTY OBVIOUS--IF HE TRACKS STRONG NEGATIVE EMOTIONS...
WHAT? NO, WHY ALWAYS ME?!
WELL...
IT'S, ME.

BUT WHY?
DUDE, IT WAS YOUR IDEA.
LET'S JUST SAY I WASN'T AS ON BOARD WITH THIS AS I LED ON.
I KNOW, I JUST... WHY DID WE DECIDE TO GO THERE AGAIN?
CLOSURE, I THOUGHT?
THE CONSTANT KNOT IN MY STOMACH WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT...
THE ANGER.
TO BE HONEST, GUYS, I'M KINDA SCARED TO GO.
YEAH, I KNOW. IT HURTS. IT'S SCARY. IT'S A PAIN TO GET THERE, MUCH MORE THAN WE EXPECTED...
AND I KNOW I'M SCARED OF HAVING TO FACE THE REALITY OF THINGS WHEN WE DO GET THERE. MAYBE THAT'S WHY IT'S SO HARD.
BUT...
WHEN'S THE LAST TIME WE GOT TO BE JUST THE FOUR OF US?

I KNOW! BETWEEN THE DOJO AND MUTANT TOWN, THINGS GOT CRAZY.
YEAH. AND WHEN DID WE BECOME PARENTS?
AND RAPH'S GOT A GIIIIRLFRIIIIEND!
YA JEALOUS?
INTERGALACTIC TRAVEL WAS WAY SIMPLER THAN THIS.
YOU'D RATHER BE SHOT AT BY TRICERATONS INSTEAD?
WOOOH... WHY DO I REMEMBER THAT AS BEING FUN?!
THE SMASHING WAS.
I KINDA MISSED THIS, GUYS.
ME TOO... LATELY IT'S LIKE... I'VE BEEN ALONE ON AN ISLAND, EVEN THOUGH I'M WITH ALL OF YOU ALL THE TIME.
BUT WE'VE ALL BEEN DOING OUR THING.
TOGETHER... BUT MILES APART.
POETIC.
HEY, I AIN'T THAT MUCH OF A BRUTE!
TONIGHT, WE MAKE UP FOR THAT.
YES... AND I KNOW WHERE TO START.
WE GO BACK AND WE PUSH THROUGH.

SO, IT'S SETTLED. WE'RE TRYING AGAIN? WE GET THE BAG BACK AND WE FINISH THIS THING?
HELL YEAH, DUDE!
BUT IT'S GONNA BE HARD. IT'S LIKE HE CAN SEE HOW WE FIGHT, HOW EACH OF US MOVES.
IT'S NOT JUST THAT. WE HAVEN'T BEEN OURSELVES IN A WHILE. IF HE ATTACKS THE WEAK, SHOWING HIM OUR COMMON STRENGTH SHOULD DRIVE HIM AWAY. WE NEED TO BE ONE AGAIN.
LIKE FATHER TAUGHT US.
DON'T SWEAT IT, BRO. I GOT AN IDEA.

CRING
CRING
HEY!
THE NIGHT STARTED WELL FOR YOU, BUT THE FEAST ENDS HERE.
PREPARE TO EXPERIENCE THE WHOOPING OF THE CENTURY!

AT THE HANDS OF...
CLAN HAMATO!
VOOSH

SWISH
TU-DUM
SWAK
SLASH
DUM
SLASH
AAAAAAH

RAAHTCHING
POW
KREH
BOOM
TCH
I HAVE IT. NOW!
ROAR

GRIP
GRIP
GRIP
MIKEY!
SAY IT.

...
IF HE FEEDS ON FEAR AND GRIEF, THEN THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE HIM LEAVE US ALONE IS TO SHOW HIM...
TCH
COOOOOWABUNGA!
...WE'RE NOT AFRAID ANYMORE.

*
POOF
LET'S GO HOME.

I WAS TERRIFIED TO GO.
FEELING THEM ALL DRIFTING AWAY LIKE WE'RE BECOMING STRANGERS.
I THOUGHT THIS WAS JUST HOW THINGS GO WHEN YOU GROW OLDER.
NYC SEWER
BUT EVEN IF WE ALL EVENTUALLY MOVE AWAY FROM ONE ANOTHER, THERE'S THIS PLACE THAT IS STILL US.
AND IT'S PROBABLY WHY I WAS AFRAID TO COME BACK HERE.
OH.

TO WALK IN THERE AND SEE IT FOR MYSELF.
WELCOME HOME, MY SONS.
HOW IT IS, NOT HOW I REMEMBER IT TO BE.
BECAUSE THAT MEANS FACING THE REALITY THAT HE'S GONE. THAT THINGS HAVE CHANGED.
HELLO, FATHER.

STRIKE HARD AND FADE INTO THE NIGHT. FATHER'S MANTRA FOR NINJAS.
BUT THERE'S A REASON WHY HE WANTED US TO DO IT TOGETHER, ALWAYS.
BECAUSE AS THE WORLD CHANGES, THE NIGHT EASILY CAN SWALLOW YOU, AND YOU CAN LOSE YOURSELF.
BUT WHEN YOU EMBRACE CHANGE TOGETHER, YOU WON'T JUST EMERGE BACK FROM THE NIGHT.

YOU WILL
SOAR.
JUNI
BA

art by KEVIN EASTMAN
colors by FAHRIZA KAMAPUTRA

art by PABLO TUNICA

ISSUE #131

"SOMETHING TERRIBLE IS COMING...
"...THE SPLINTER CLAN MUST BE READY FOR IT.
"I'VE BEEN WATCHING OVER YOU, THOUGH I WOULD RATHER LEAVE YOU BE...
"...I'VE DONE ENOUGH HARM TO YOU."

BEFORE.
BUT I MADE YOUR FATHER A PROMISE.
I KNOW HOW IT LOOKS, GUYS, BUT WE HAVE TO LISTEN TO HIM.
HE'S TELLING THE TRUTH.
I'VE BEEN UNSURE HOW TO HONOR YOSHI. EVERYTHING SEEMS INTRUSIVE.
BUT WITH THIS COMING ARMAGEDDON GAME* I CAN NO LONGER SIT IDLY BY.
RAT KING'S GAME WILL BRING OBSTACLES LIKE YOU HAVE NEVER FACED BEFORE, AND WITHOUT THE PROPER TRAINING YOU WILL NOT SURVIVE.
*See ARMAGEDDON GAME: OPENING MOVES--CB
IT IS MY DUTY TO TEACH YOU THE LOST MYSTIC ARTS.
TECHNIQUES THAT WILL HELP YOU SUCCEED AGAINST THIS ONSLAUGHT.
"AN ANCIENT DISCIPLINE CALLED KUJI-KIRI, THE NINE CUTS, ARE ENACTED BY HAND GESTURES THAT PULL ON THE MYSTICAL ENERGIES OF THE UNIVERSE..."

BECAUSE THESE TECHNIQUES ARE DANGEROUS, ONLY A SMALL HANDFUL OF SPECIALIZED NINJA IN THE OLD WORLD WOULD LEARN THEM AT HIDDEN TEMPLES DEEP WITHIN THE WILDERNESS.
THE DISCIPLINES WOULD BE TAUGHT ONLY TO INDIVIDUALS UNDERTAKING CRITICAL, SECRET MISSIONS, AND IT WAS FORBIDDEN TO USE THESE DISCIPLINES OUTSIDE THAT PARTICULAR MISSION.
HOW COME THIS STUFF IS SO *DANGEROUS*, THOUGH?
BECAUSE THESE TECHNIQUES HAVE CLOSE TIES TO *BLACK MAGIC*.
LIKE THE BLACK MAGIC KITSUNE USED ON ME.
LEO, I'M SORRY, BUT ARE YOU GUYS EVER GONNA TELL ME WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?
THAT'S NOT A BEAR YOU WANNA POKE, JENNY.
NOT NOW, JENNY.
OKAY...
LEONARDO KNOWS PERHAPS BETTER THAN ANY OF US THAT BLACK MAGIC CAN OPEN YOU UP TO *DARK SPIRITS*.
I CHOSE THIS AREA OF THE FOREST BECAUSE IT'S A *THIN PLACE*, WHERE THE WALLS BETWEEN WORLDS ARE MALLEABLE.
THIS PLACE'S INHERENT DARK MAGIC MAKES LEARNING *KUJI-KIRI* FEATS EASIER AND FASTER, WHICH IS NOT WITHOUT RISK.

"...BUT TIME IS SHORT."
YOU ALREADY KNOW SOME OF THE BASIC PRINCIPLES...
...SUCH AS ASTRAL PROJECTION, WHICH IS PART OF THE SEVENTH CUT, RETSU, THE CONTROL OF SPACE AND TIME.
TODAY YOU WILL LEARN RIN.
STRENGTH, RIGHT?
CORRECT, MICHELANGELO.
THIS IS THE GESTURE.
NOW, OBSERVE.
CRAK!
THE MYSTIC ARTS CARRY RISKS, HOWEVER.
THEY CAN BE DEBILITATING TO THE USER AND THOSE AROUND THEM. TO AVOID THIS, AFTER YOU INVOKE ENERGY, YOU MUST THEN REVOKE IT.
LIKE NOT LEAVING A MACHINE RUNNING UNATTENDED.
OR WHEN RAPH TAKES FOREVER IN THE SHOWER AND THERE'S NO HOT WATER LEFT.

"THE ENERGIES CAN AFFECT ONE'S MIND AND BODY IF LEFT UNCONTROLLED.
"THESE TECHNIQUES ARE TO BE USED SPARINGLY.
"BUT WITHOUT HESITATION.
"AND ALWAYS IN SECRECY.
"THE KUJI-KIRI WORK PROPERLY ONLY IN THE SHADOWS. THE DIRECT GAZE OF AN OUTSIDER WILL CAUSE THE MAGIC TO GO AWRY.
"YOU MUST ALWAYS REMEMBER..."

"...THAT WHEN IN DARKNESS, YOU WON'T BE THE ONLY ONES LURKING THERE."
"YOU GUYS ARE OUT OF YOUR MINDS..."
...ARMAGEDDON-WHATEVER OR NOT, HAMATO YOSHI OR NOT, I CANNOT BELIEVE YOU'D GO ALONG WITH THIS!
I'M DISGUSTED YOU GUYS WOULD EVEN CONSIDER THE IDEA OF LETTING SHREDDER OF ALL PEOPLE INTO YOUR LIVES AFTER EVERYTHING HE'S DONE!
AS JONIN OF THE SPLINTER CLAN, I'M ORDERING YOU TO--
UGH, SHUT UP, LEO! DON'T GIVE ME THAT!
SHREDDER BRAINWASHED YOU, LEO, AND ME! HE BURNED DOWN MY HOME!
RAPH, HE HAD ME EXPERIMENTED ON!
HE STOLE MY LIFE AS A NORMAL FOX.
I'LL NEVER SEE MY FAMILY AGAIN BECAUSE OF HIM!

OKAY, I GET IT, ALOPEX, BUT WE--
NO, RAPH! DON'T EVEN!
IF YOU GUYS ARE GONNA GO THROUGH WITH THIS...
"...THEN I'M DONE WITH THE SPLINTER CLAN."

RAPHAEL! YOU CAN'T RUN FROM US!
I LOOK FORWARD TO HAVING YOU WITH ME AGAIN.
TOGETHER WE CAN SET OFF ANOTHER BOMB!
BISHOP... HOB...?!
NO! GET AWAY!
WE COULD CHANGE SO MANY LIVES.

SHUT UP!
YOU GONNA TAKE MY LIFE, TOO, RAPH?
YOU DESTROYED WHAT WE HAD.
ALOPEX! I DIDN'T THINK--
SPPROUT
YOU NEVER THINK.
I KNOW YOU DIDN'T.

RAPH?
BRO, IS THAT Y--
HUH?
SLASH?!
NO...

HOW COULD YOU LEAVE US?!
THUD
FIGHT.
US!
I WON'T.

HEY, WHERE YOU GOIN'?
STOP! LEAVE ME ALONE!
YOU CAN'T GO NOWHERES WITHOUT US, BUDDY!
SO MANY GOOD MEMORIES!
FATHER...
VENUS...
HELP ME!!!

JUST LIKE OLD TIMES!
NO, I...
...I CAN DO THIS...
I SEE YOU.
I SEE YOU.
ZOOM
HOW COULD YOU DO THIS, DONATELLO? I TRIED TO FIX YOU... I TRIED...

STOP TOUCHING MY FEET...
WHAT THE...
...WHAT IS THIS?!

A REUNION, BABY.
RITA... I'M SORRY...
STOP THIS. PLEASE. GET OFF ME.
SILAS...
...IVAN...
...KARAI!
RITA, PLEASE...
STOP. YOU'RE HURTING ME.
I SAID GET OFF ME!

...AND THEN I CHOKED AND IT JUST MELTED. IT WAS WILD!
OH MAN. MINE WAS LIKE SLASH BUT A ZOMBIE? IT REALLY MADE ME MISS HIM, THOUGH, Y'KNOW?
WISH I COULDA KNOWN HIM LIKE YOU DID.
YEAH... HE WAS A COOL DUDE.
WHAT WAS YOURS LIKE, DONNIE?
BEBOP AND ROCKSTEADY, OF COURSE. I CAN'T SEEM TO GET AWAY FROM THOSE GUYS.
I SUPPOSE THAT'S THE POINT, THOUGH.
HEY, LEO, WHAT WAS YOUR THIN PLACE NIGHTMARE OR WHATEVER?
I...
...I DIDN'T HAVE ONE.
HUH. WONDER HOW COME.

SO I WANNA KNOW MORE ABOUT WHAT WE'RE SUPPOSED TO DO WITH ALL THIS STUFF YOU'RE TEACHIN' US, SAKI.
ARE WE FINALLY GONNA GET TO STICK IT TO RAT KING?
I HOPE SO, RAPHAEL. BUT THIS WON'T BE ANY ORDINARY FIGHT.
THE RAT KING AND THE REST OF THE PANTHEON ARE GODS... AND THIS TIME THE VERMIN HAS ENLISTED YOUR OTHER ENEMIES...
YOU WILL ALL BE TARGETS OF RAT KING'S MACHINATIONS, AS WILL YOUR LOVED ONES.
EVERYTHING RAT KING HAS DONE HAS BEEN LEADING TO THIS.
SO YOU'LL NEED ALL THE HELP YOU CAN GET, AND I'M HERE TO PROVIDE THAT.
SAKI, IS KITSUNE INVOLVED IN THIS? WE NEED TO KNOW.
AGREED. SHE'S RAT KING'S SISTER.
AND YOU TWO WERE TOGETHER, RIGHT?
KITSUNE...
THIS IS THE RAT KING'S GAME. KITSUNE IS NOT INVOLVED.

SAKI, I BELIEVE YOU.
BUT WHY DIDN'T I HAVE A THIN PLACE VISION LIKE THE OTHERS? I KNOW IT MUST MEAN SOMETHING.
I'VE BEEN SENSING MUCH UNEASE FROM YOU, LEONARDO.
I BELIEVE YOU HAVE A PARTICULAR CAPACITY FOR BLACK MAGIC.
AND YOU'RE FIGHTING IT.
IT'S SOMETHING YOU MUST LEARN.
THE SEEDS OF THIS MAGIC ARE ALREADY IN YOU, AS YOU PROBABLY KNOW...
"YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT MY DARK SELF THAT YOU AND KITSUNE CREATED, RIGHT?"
YES. FOR THAT I'M SORRY.
BUT YOU MUST DO BATTLE WITH HIM AGAIN. THAT'S WHY YOU DIDN'T HAVE A VISION LAST NIGHT.

BUT I ALREADY DID BATTLE WITH HIM, AND DEFEATED HIM.
YOU ONLY SUBJUGATED HIM. YOU BEAT HIM BACK, BUT HE ISN'T DESTROYED.
YOU TALK ABOUT HIM LIKE HE'S JUST A SIMPLE DARK SIDE OF MY PERSONALITY, BUT IT'S NOT LIKE THAT.
IT'S A THING THAT WAS CREATED. AN UNNATURAL ENTITY.
KITSUNE IS THE EXPERT, OF COURSE, SHE'S THE SPELLCASTER, BUT YOUR DARK SELF WAS CREATED FROM YOU, NOT FROM WHOLE CLOTH.
HE WASN'T IMPLANTED IN YOU, HE WAS WOVEN FROM THE SAME STUFF THAT YOU ARE MADE OF.

AND TO PREPARE FOR RAT KING'S COMING WAR, YOU *MUST* LEARN TO *INHABIT* THAT DARK SIDE.
SO I HAVE TO... SUMMON *DARK LEONARDO*, CONJURE HIM UP FROM INSIDE MYSELF, AND THEN WHAT?
YOU HARNESS HIM.
BECOME HIM.
THEN YOU'LL KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO.

art by KEVIN EASTMAN

art by PABLO TUNICA

ISSUE #132

LEONARDO...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
WHAT WERE YOU THINKING?
HOW COULD YOU LEAD YOUR FAMILY INTO THE HANDS...

...OF YOUR GREATEST ENEMY?
HOW COULD YOU TRUST HIM AFTER EVERYTHING HE'S DONE?
RAAGH! IT'S WHAT OUR FATHER WANTED!
HOW COULD YOU BE SO NAIVE AND SO STUPID...
...TO THINK SHREDDER WOULD EVER BE ON YOUR SIDE?
RRGH--
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE LOOKING OUT FOR YOUR FAMILY.
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE THEIR LEADER.
BUT OVER AND OVER AGAIN...
GUH!

"...YOU KEEP LEADING THEM DOWN ALL THE WRONG PATHS."
THE PATH OF THE MYSTIC ARTS IS NOT EASILY UNDERTAKEN...
...BUT YOU ARE ALL PROGRESSING WELL.
THE FIRST STEP OF LEARNING THE KUJI-KIRI IS TWOFOLD, THE FIRST CUT, RIN, AND THE SECOND CUT, PYO.
THIS WILL INVOLVE THE CONSTRUCTION OF TALISMANS CALLED GOFU.
GOFU ARE OBJECTS IMBUED WITH SPIRITS WHOSE POWER CAN BE CALLED UPON.
IN ANCIENT SHINOBI SORCERY, THESE TALISMANS WERE USED AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN THE PRACTITIONER AND THE SPIRIT WORLD.
THIS THIN PLACE IS AN ENTRANCE TO THE SPIRIT WORLD, TEEMING WITH MAGIC THAT WILL AID IN KUJI-KIRI MASTERY.
THIS IS WHERE YOUR NEXT STEPS ON THE MYSTIC PATH WILL BE TAKEN.
WHAT ARE THESE CREATURES?
THEY'RE SPIRITS! BUT FIRST, KEEP IN MIND THE FIVE ELEMENTS, TO WHICH THE MYSTIC ARTS AND NATURE ITSELF ARE TIED...
THIS SHAPE IS THE GOBOSEI, THE BELLFLOWER, REPRESENTING THE FIVE ELEMENTS.
ARRANGED IN THIS FORMATION, GOFU WILL ACT AS A FOCUS TO CHANNEL ENERGY.
NOW, BY CONSTRUCTING YOUR GOFU FROM THE NATURAL ELEMENTS YOU FIND IN THIS MYSTIC FOREST...

"...YOU WILL CREATE A LINK BETWEEN YOURSELVES AND THE *SPIRIT WORLD,* JUST AS THE ANCIENT SHINOBI ONCE DID.
"THE TALISMANS MUST REFLECT YOUR TRUE SELVES SO THAT THEY WILL *TETHER* YOUR SPIRIT.
"*RIN*, THE FIRST CUT, IS *'STRENGTH'* AND *'CONFRONTATION.'*
"IT IS *COURAGE* AND *STEELING ONESELF* FOR WHAT WILL BE CONFRONTED.
"IT IS THE FIRST STEP IN READYING YOURSELVES FOR THE RAT KING'S MACHINATIONS.
"THE SECOND CUT, *PYO*, IS *'THE SOLDIER'* AND *'TO CHANNEL.'*
"IT IS TO MAINTAIN FOCUS AND FORTITUDE.
"IT IS *CHANNELING* YOUR WILL DURING GREAT TESTS OF ENDURANCE."

WELL DONE.
OVER THE PAST FEW DAYS, YOU'VE ALL REACHED A PLACE OF MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL READINESS.
NORMALLY ONE WOULD PROGRESS TO THE THIRD CUT, BUT IN THIS CASE, WE WILL MOVE TO THE FIFTH.
BECAUSE THERE'S FIVE OF US, RIGHT?
YES AND NO.
FIVE ELEMENTS. AND YES, *YOU* ARE FIVE.
AND *KAI* IS CUT NUMBER FIVE. NUMEROLOGY IS POWERFUL.
BUT IT'S ALSO A MATTER OF THE BEST WAY, AS A GROUP AND INDIVIDUALS, TO LEARN THESE TECHNIQUES.

KAI MEANS "ALL" AND "WITH EVERYONE."
IT WILL ALLOW EACH OF YOU TO SENSE IF THE OTHERS ARE IN DANGER.
IT WILL BIND YOU TOGETHER, ALWAYS.
NOW, YOU MUST TRAIN APART BEFORE COMING BACK TOGETHER.
COME, LEONARDO.
AS THE JONIN, YOU WILL BE FIRST.

LEONARDO, YOU HAVE A SINGULAR FOCUS AND SELF-CONTROL. YOU LEARN BEST THROUGH PERSEVERANCE AND SHEER WILL.
I WILL TEACH YOU SHA, THE FOURTH CUT.
"AGAINST A FOE."
AND "HEALING."
IT SEEMS CONTRADICTORY, BUT YOU MUST RECONCILE THE TWO CONCEPTS INTO ONE WHEN THE TIME COMES.
I UNDERSTAND.
IT'S TO SHIELD MY SPIRIT FROM MY DARK SELF...
...WHILE I INHABIT HIM.
OR MAYBE IT'S...

...HE INHABITS ME.
MICHELANGELO, YOU LEARN BEST THROUGH YOUR CONNECTION WITH OTHERS.
YOU OBSERVE OTHERS AND LEARN MOST EFFECTIVELY WHEN IN A GROUP.
THIS IS THE THIRD CUT, TO.
"HARMONY." "BATTLE."
HOW CAN IT MEAN BOTH HARMONY AND BATTLE? THOSE SEEM LIKE OPPOSITES.
THEY CAN BE, BUT THERE IS A CERTAIN HARMONY TO CONFLICT.
FOOOOW
SWOCK!
YOU WILL CREATE HARMONY WHERE THERE IS NONE, BOTH IN BATTLE AND IN PEACE.

JENNIKA, YOU'RE A MUSICIAN. YOU UNDERSTAND MELODY--THAT NOTES ARE JUST MOMENTS THAT FORM A LONGER ARRANGEMENT.
KUJI-KIRI IS THE SAME. THESE TECHNIQUES ARE NOTES THAT STRING TOGETHER TO FORM SOMETHING BIGGER.
THIS IS ZAI, THE SIXTH CUT.
"TO APPEAR." "TO CREATE."
INDIVIDUAL MOVEMENTS ARRANGED DIFFERENTLY CREATE DIFFERENT COMPOSITIONS.
WITH THIS TECHNIQUE, YOU CAN CREATE FALSEHOODS...
...OR EXPOSE TRUTHS.

HOW COULD TRUSTING SHREDDER EVER BE THE RIGHT WAY TO DEFEAT THE RAT KING?
LEONARDO. LISTEN TO ME.
THIS IS NOT ABOUT OVERCOMING YOUR FOE.
REMEMBER, YOU MUST STAND AGAINST. THIS IS ABOUT CONTROLLING YOUR FOE.
A KATANA IS ALSO AN INSTRUMENT OF CONTROL.
WHY ARE YOU LISTENING TO HIM?
USE THE THREAT OF INJURY...

...TO DISTRACT YOUR FOE...
THU
...AND USE THEIR DISRUPTED FOCUS TO MANIPULATE THEIR MOVEMENTS.
I THINK I UNDERSTAND.
MANEUVER MY FOE IN A DIRECTION I WANT HIM TO MOVE.
FHHS
THE KATANA IS NOT *JUST* A SHARP EDGE.
YOU'RE BEING CARELESS WITH YOUR FAMILY'S LIVES.
IS THIS REALLY WHAT YOUR FATHER MEANT? PLAYING RIGHT INTO YOUR ENEMY'S HANDS?

ROTE MEMORIZATION IS YOUR MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO LEARN. WOULD YOU AGREE?
WITHOUT A DOUBT. LISTS, CHARTS, REPETITION...
I KNOW WHAT THIS IS ALREADY, *RETSU.*
"CONTROL OF SPACE AND TIME."
"TO MOVE IN A ROW."
YES, THE SEVENTH CUT. I'M IMPRESSED, DONATELLO.
EVER SINCE VENUS AND MY ASTRAL PLANE EXPERIENCE, ALL THIS ***MYSTICISM*** SEEMS SO MUCH CLEARER TO ME.
I STILL DON'T ***QUITE*** UNDERSTAND IT, BUT I FEEL LIKE I'M ON MY WAY ALREADY.

I'VE COME TO UNDERSTAND THAT YOU'RE MOTIVATED MOST BY YOUR DRIVE TO RIGHT WRONGS, RAPHAEL.
YOU MAKE A MISTAKE, YOU LEARN FROM THAT MISTAKE.
THIS IS JIN, THE EIGHTH CUT.
"IN FORMATION." "TO PREPARE."
"READING OF THOUGHTS."
TO WIN THE COMING FIGHT, YOU WILL NEED TO CONNECT WITH YOUR ENEMY. WALK WITH THEM.
YOU CAN NO LONGER ACT BEFORE LEARNING ABOUT YOUR ENEMY.
WHAT DO YOU SENSE?
I SENSE...
...I SENSE YOU.
YOU REALLY DO JUST WANNA HELP US.
I THINK I GET IT NOW.

I GET IT NOW.
DON'T BE A FOOL.
THIS ISN'T THE RIGHT WAY.

YES, IT IS.
YOU'LL STAY THERE...
...UNTIL I NEED YOU.

"YOU ARE ALL READY TO FACE WHAT LIES AHEAD.
"IT'S TIME TO LEARN THE NINTH CUT. ZEN.
"TO MOVE FORWARD.
"I KNOW THIS HAS BEEN DIFFICULT FOR YOU, GIVEN WHO I AM AND WHAT I'VE DONE TO ALL OF YOU.
"SO I THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING ME IN.
"MY TIME WITH YOU HERE IN THE WILDERNESS HAS MEANT SO MUCH TO ME.
"I KNOW MANY THINGS ARE UNCERTAIN FOR YOU RIGHT NOW, AND THE FUTURE SEEMS GRIM.
"BUT ONE THING I DO KNOW FOR CERTAIN IS..."

"...THAT YOUR FATHER WOULD BE SO PROUD OF YOU AND WHAT YOU'VE ALL BECOME."
SAKI IS RIGHT. I AM PROUD OF YOU AND ALL THAT YOU'VE ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT ME.
TOGETHER YOU HAVE LEARNED THE FINAL AND GREATEST TRUTH OF THE NINJA, A LESSON THAT I'D HOPED TO TEACH YOU MYSELF.
THAT TRUTH IS THE FORCE THAT BROUGHT ME HERE TONIGHT, THE SAME FORCE THAT BINDS US ALL TOGETHER.
TOGETHER, YOU ARE POWERFUL.
DRAW UPON ONE ANOTHER, EVEN WHEN YOU ARE APART.

FATHER, DON'T GO...
WE MISS YOU!
I MISS YOU AS WELL, BUT NEVER FORGET...
...THAT I LOVE YOU ALL.

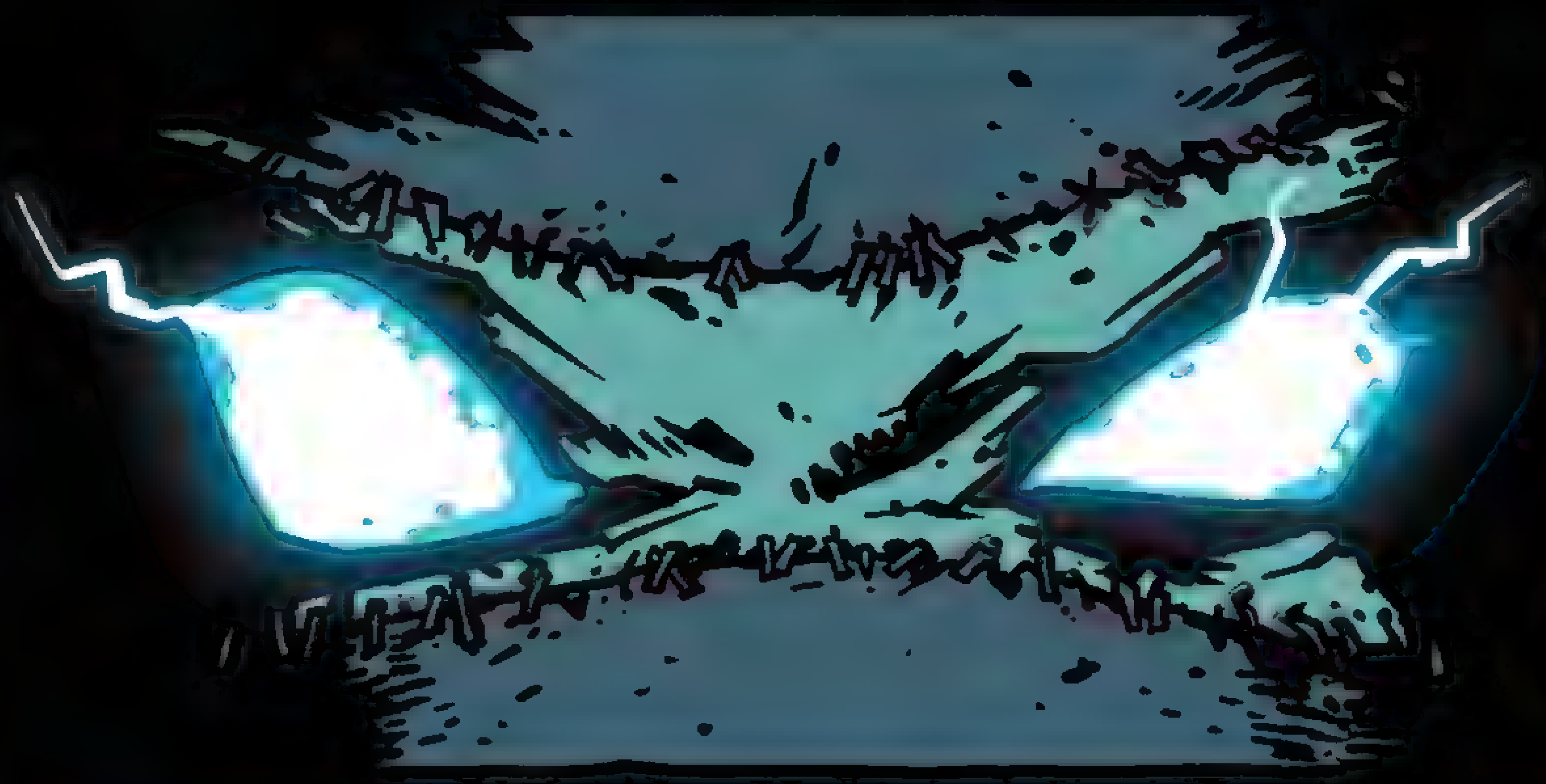
JENNY, YOU OKAY?
I DUNNO. I GUESS SO.
THE BARN STILL ISN'T FIXED.
Y'KNOW, I STILL THINK ABOUT THAT DAY ALL THE TIME.
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE ONE OF THOSE FOOT ASSASSINS KOYA BROUGHT.
YEAH. MY FIRST MISSION. CRAZY, HUH?
LAST SUMMER WE ACTUALLY DID A LOT OF WORK ON THE BARN, BUT OTHER THAN THAT IT'S BEEN LITTLE BY LITTLE, WHENEVER THERE'S TIME.
I'LL HELP NEXT TIME.
DEFINITELY. WHEN YOU HAVE DAMAGE THAT SEVERE...

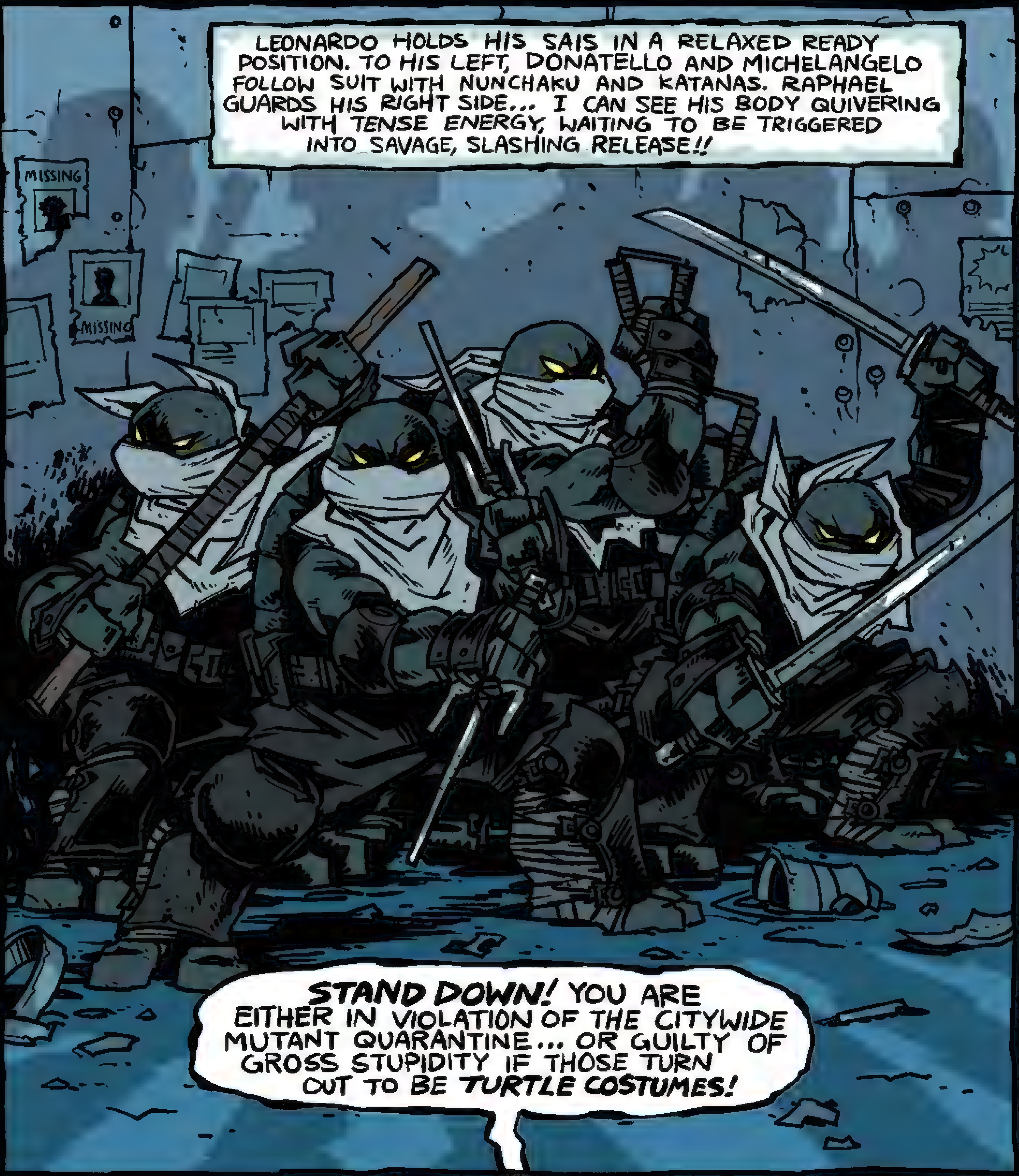
"...IT JUST TAKES SOME TIME TO GET IT ALL FIXED."
ARE YOU ALL READY?
YES.
THEN LET'S GO.
IT'S TIME TO GATHER THE OTHERS.

art by KEVIN EASTMAN

art by SOPHIE CAMPBELL

2022 FREE COMIC BOOK DAY


THE ONE IN CHARGE... HIS NAME'S LEONARDO. HE MADE A WRONG TURN SOMEWHERE. NOW THEY'RE ALL CAUGHT WITH THEIR BACKS TO THE WALL IN A TRASH-STREWN ALLEY. BARRING THE WAY OUT ARE FIFTEEN SOLDIERS OF THE EARTH PROTECTION FORCE, A WELL-ARMED SQUAD PATROLLING THE EAST SIDE. THE ONLY WAY OUT FOR THE FOUR OF THEM IS CAPTURE... OR DEATH!!


LEONARDO HOLDS HIS SAIS IN A RELAXED READY POSITION. TO HIS LEFT, DONATELLO AND MICHELANGELO FOLLOW SUIT WITH NUNCHAKU AND KATANAS. RAPHAEL GUARDS HIS RIGHT SIDE... I CAN SEE HIS BODY QUIVERING WITH TENSE ENERGY, WAITING TO BE TRIGGERED INTO SAVAGE, SLASHING RELEASE!!
MISSING
MISSING
STAND DOWN! YOU ARE EITHER IN VIOLATION OF THE CITYWIDE MUTANT QUARANTINE... OR GUILTY OF GROSS STUPIDITY IF THOSE TURN OUT TO BE TURTLE COSTUMES!

HE'S ABOUT TO FIND OUT...
THEY'RE NOT WEARING **COSTUMES.**
TURTLES
CAMPBELL AND WALTZ
AFTER
EASTMAN AND LAIRD

HERE THEY COME!
DEADLY FORCE AUTHORIZED!
THE SOLDIERS ARE YOUNG BUT WELL-TRAINED. THEY'VE BEEN AROUND, HARDENED BY COMBAT. THEY'VE FOUGHT AND BEATEN BOTH HUMANS AND ALIENS..... BUT NOT NINJAS.
THE NINJA TURTLES HIT THE E.P.F. SQUAD AIRBORNE. LEONARDO STABS TWO ON THE WAY DOWN. DONATELLO TAKES OUT A THIRD WITH HIS NUNCHAKU.
THE SOLDIERS DON'T WASTE MUCH TIME ON HAND-TO-HAND. THEY BREAK INTO SMALL FLANKING TEAMS AND OPEN UP WITH THEIR GUNS!

THE ONE CALLED RAPHAEL SEEMS TO LOVE THIS STUFF. THERE'S A BLUR AS HIS BO COMES OUT...
EPF
...THE THREE SOLDIERS DON'T EVEN SEE THAT.
TOO BAD.

WHAT ARE THESE THINGS?!
DON'T KNOW... SOME KINDA NINJAS!
BUT EVEN NINJAS CAN BLEED! LIGHT 'EM UP!!
YEAH, THEY CAN BLEED...

...BUT THE SOLDIERS CAN TOO!
THE SKIRMISH IS OVER AND ONLY THE FOUR MUTANTS ARE STILL STANDING. THEIR TRAINING HAS SERVED THEM WELL.
A POLICE SIREN WAILS CLOSE BY, COMING FAST. WHEN THEY ARRIVE, THEY'LL FIND ONLY WHAT'S LEFT OF THE E.P.F. SQUAD.

THEY RUN FROM THOSE WHO SHOULD BE THEIR **ALLIES.**
THE STORM DRAIN BECKONS. THEY WERE NEVER FAR FROM A MEANS OF ESCAPE...
...AS IF THEY **PLANNED** FOR ALL THIS.
THEY STRUCK HARD AND FADED AWAY...

...INTO THE NIGHT.

AND I'M SIMPLY LEFT WONDERING...
...WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?!
GOOD QUESTION! FIND OUT ANSWERS TO THIS AND MUCH MORE SOON IN...
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES THE ARMAGEDDON GAME!

art by FERO PE

art by KEN GARING

art by MATEUS SANTOLOUCO

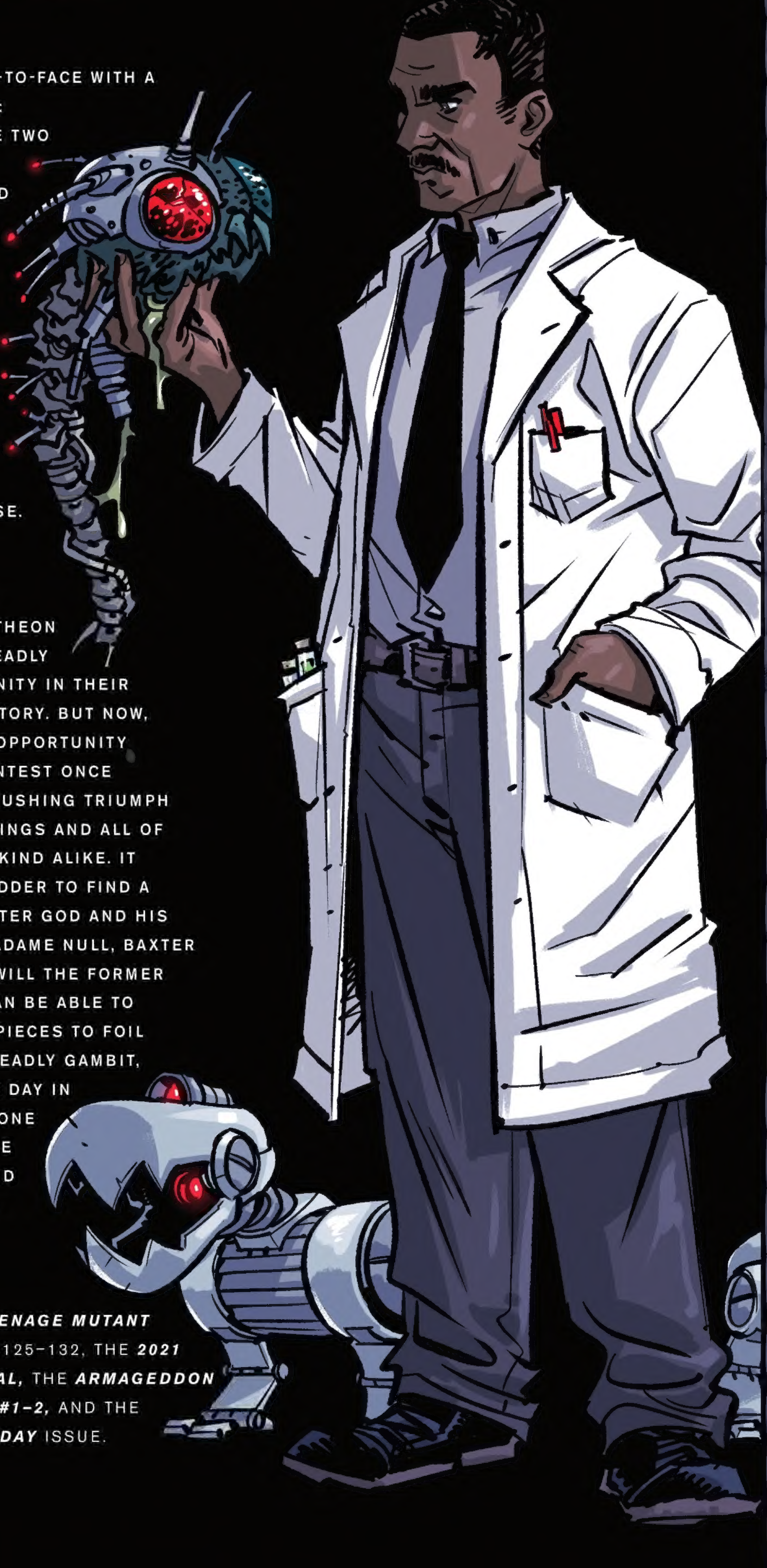
art by MATEUS SANTOLOUCO

art by ROI MERCADO
colors by WILLIAM SOARES

art by JUNI BA

art by ABEL
colors by PH GOMEZ

PRESENTING THE COMPLETE *TMNT* STORIES IN RECOMMENDED READING ORDER!



THE TURTLES COME FACE-TO-FACE WITH A TERRITORIAL NEW GROUP: THE PUNK FROGS! AS THE TWO SIDES BATTLE ACROSS MUTANT TOWN, FRESH AND FAMILIAR ENEMIES MAKE THEIR OWN DEVIOUS MOVES. THE UTROMS AND TRICERATONS HAVE RETURNED, AND THEIR TENSIONS ARE AT A BREAKING POINT! PLUS, A STRANGE DOCTOR APPROACHES THE TURTLES WITH AN OFFER THEY CAN'T EASILY REFUSE.

THEN, GET READY FOR THE ARMAGEDDON GAME! FOR MILLENNIA, THE PANTHEON FAMILY HAVE PLAYED A DEADLY CHESS GAME WITH HUMANITY IN THEIR TWISTED PURSUIT OF VICTORY. BUT NOW, THE RAT KING SEES THE OPPORTUNITY TO END THE ETERNAL CONTEST ONCE AND FOR ALL: A FINAL, CRUSHING TRIUMPH OVER HIS IMMORTAL SIBLINGS AND ALL OF HUMANKIND AND MUTANTKIND ALIKE. IT WILL BE UP TO THE SHREDDER TO FIND A WAY TO STOP THE TRICKSTER GOD AND HIS NEW TRIO OF TERROR—MADAME NULL, BAXTER STOCKMAN, AND KRANG! WILL THE FORMER MASTER OF THE FOOT CLAN BE ABLE TO LOCATE THE NECESSARY PIECES TO FOIL THE RAT KING'S LATEST DEADLY GAMBIT, OR WILL CHAOS RULE THE DAY IN NYC AND MUTANT TOWN? ONE THING'S FOR CERTAIN: THE ANSWERS WON'T BE FOUND IN ONLY ONE DIMENSION.

VOLUME 16 COLLECTS ***TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES*** ISSUES #125–132, THE ***2021 ANNUAL,*** THE ***2022 ANNUAL,*** THE ***ARMAGEDDON GAME: OPENING MOVES #1–2,*** AND THE ***2022 FREE COMIC BOOK DAY*** ISSUE.

IDW